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SPEAIGHT.

COUNTESS NATHALIE BENCKENDORFF.

157, New Bond Street, W.



COUNTRY LIFE
The Journal for all interested in
Country Life and Country Pursuits

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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MR. HAROURT'S BILL.

FEW measures have been looked forward to with keener interest than the Small Holdings Bill which was introduced into the House of Commons on Monday night by Mr. Lewis Harcourt. After the appearance of the Scotch measure there was good ground for apprehending that it might prove still more extreme, and many of those who listened to Mr. Harcourt's exposition must have been agreeably surprised at the moderation and good sense which have governed those who drew it up. For we consider that it would be useless to deny that the measure is a sound, moderate and workmanlike one, and this is said with all the more pleasure because there was reason to believe that the extreme section of the party now in power would force the hand of the Government and oblige Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman to acquiesce in some strong and revolutionary scheme designed to upset completely the relations between landlord and tenant in Great Britain. But it is a measure of the merit of Mr. Harcourt's Bill that the worst that can be said against it consists of a sneer at what has been called Liberalism in kid gloves. The provisions, as a matter of fact, do not go far enough to satisfy the more extreme members of the Unionist Party. Mr. Jesse Collings and his followers have already declared that it is quite insufficient to meet the needs of the occasion. They had set their minds on a Bill that would re-establish the yeoman farmer or the small proprietor in Great Britain. Mr. Harcourt was quite explicit on the subject. "We have no desire," he said, "to set up in England and Wales a class of small owners who are indebted to the State and to the intervention of the credit of the State." He could not have more flatly contradicted the policy set forth by Mr. Jesse Collings, who instances the case of Ireland, where funds on a gigantic scale were provided by the Government to enable the tenants to become the owners of their holdings. The Government, however, seems to have realised that the patience of the British taxpayer is exhausted. He would not consent, and it would not be fair to ask him, to provide money for the purpose of enabling certain people to buy land. Mr. Arthur Young's saying, "The magic of property turns sand into gold," was, as was inevitable, quoted against Mr. Harcourt; but against this more or less theoretical declaration stands the fact that in the olden times ownership did nothing of the kind for the small holder in Great Britain. On the contrary, land under him was neglected and soon became burdened with debt. He himself was not able to provide the machinery and other appliances required for the best farming, and the consequence was that he disappeared.

To revive these things would have been only to invite a repetition of that sad and tragic history.

Mr. Harcourt, who no doubt has been acting in full harmony with Lord Carrington, is well advised to make his Bill mainly one for the establishment of small holders of the tenant class. The class "which we aim at creating," he said, "is that of occupying, cultivating tenants." He went on to say, however, that they were to be tenants of a public authority. The plan of the Bill is that the purchase of land, which may be compulsory where the exercise of compulsory powers is requisite, should devolve upon the county council or some other local body, and that the parish council or, where there is no parish council, parish meeting should have the management of the small holdings. But in the event of their default commissioners are to be appointed under the Board of Agriculture. The salaries of these officials will have to be voted, so that their action will come under the control of Parliament. It is proposed to give them wide powers of enquiry as to the demand for, and the practicability of, small holdings and allotments in any and every county in England and Wales. Where schemes are put forward by the local authority they will take them into consideration, and if schemes are not placed before them they will provide them themselves. The county council is to be empowered to acquire land for small holdings either by purchase or on lease, and either by agreement or by compulsion. If land be taken on lease it must not be for a period less than fourteen years, or more than thirty-five years, and the lease can be renewed on expiration, though not necessarily at the same rent. Provision is made, however, that no increase of rent shall be demanded solely on account of improvements made by the county council or their tenants. In this connection a very sensible clause is introduced, enabling the landlord to recover possession of all or any part of the land at any time that he may require it for industrial, building, or any purposes other than those of agriculture. In many cases the landlord would naturally obstruct as far as he could any plan for letting out this land in small holdings if it were likely to have any value, as long as he thought that he could not get it back when required. The clause to which we have referred is likely to cause much land to be given up readily to small holdings that would otherwise have been withheld.

In the whole of the scheme it is evident that great pains have been taken to keep out the Socialistic principles advocated so widely elsewhere. Some contribution the country will have to pay; for example, the Board of Agriculture will have power, where they think it desirable, to pay all or part of the preliminary costs of the scheme, in order that the rent which will subsequently fall on the tenant may not be overburdened by these charges. Mr. Harcourt justified that by the contention that the provision of small holdings is a great national service for which the State may reasonably be asked to contribute a certain amount to the cost of the machinery; but he went on to say emphatically, "let the House clearly understand that there is nothing in this proposal in the nature of a charity rent, nor is there going to be any contribution to rent out of local rates." From the moment that the purchase or the hiring is completed all the expense of purchase, of equipment and of management is to be treated as a whole in assessing the new rent. There is no provision securing fixity of tenure for the tenants, but they will have a guarantee of freedom from disturbance in the fact that they are tenants of a public and elected body. An attempt was made in the subsequent debate to raise the scarecrow that rents will be raised if by the labour and enterprise of the tenants the soil should be improved; but we cannot see that there is much in this foreboding. A public body differs very much from an individual in that respect. The members have nothing to gain individually from an increase of rent, and they are very unlikely to challenge unpopularity by taking advantage of the industry of those who hold the land. We have to look at these matters from a practical point of view. Theoretically, anything may happen at any time; but in the usual course of things there is little reason to fear injustice under the Bill which has been introduced. Mr. Lewis Harcourt may be congratulated on the tact and ability with which he has handled a difficult subject. His management is strikingly in contrast with that of Mr. Sinclair, who is responsible for the Small Holdings Act for Scotland.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of Countess Nathalie Benckendorff. Countess Nathalie is the daughter of the Russian Ambassador to London, Count de Benckendorff, who married in 1879 Countess Sophie Schouvaloff.

** It is particularly requested that no permissions to photograph houses, gardens, or livestock on behalf of COUNTRY LIFE be granted except when direct application is made from the offices of the paper. When such requests are received, the Editor would esteem the kindness of readers if they would forward the correspondence at once to him.



COUNTRY NOTES

THE news from the United States and Canada still points to an upward movement in the price of wheat owing to the sharp frost which has visited the cereal areas both in the United States and in the Dominion. The price of 35s. per quarter is the latest quotation on which we can lay our hands, and it is likely to rise higher within a short space of time. It seems in every way probable that something like 40s. a quarter may be reached before harvest. Should this be so it is evident that the English farmer will be able to make a considerable profit. It used to be said thirty years ago that to make the growing of wheat profitable a price of at least 40s. a quarter was necessary, but that was before the introduction of many improvements that are now in common use. The cost of cultivation itself, of course, varies according to the character of the land and the district; but it may be taken as tolerably certain that the average farmer in England can grow wheat that will yield a profit if sold at 30s. a quarter. If that be the case, and we do not think many practical men will question it, agriculture during the course of the present year ought to produce much more considerable profits than it has done since the great depression began in 1879.

A subscriber to *COUNTRY LIFE*, who was a friend of the late Hon. Algernon H. Grosvenor, sends us a few notes about that very interesting personality which we gladly publish, although some weeks have passed since the lamented death of Mr. Grosvenor. Our correspondent, who signs himself H. J. J., writes: "The recent revival of public interest in tennis brings to mind many changes and recalls many memories. Memories of Mr. Heathcote's prowess, Mr. Lyttelton's classic form and Sir Edward Grey's inevitable grille came quickly to those who watched the amateur championship, culminating in the Titanic struggle between Mr. Gould and Mr. Miles, and instinctively we were led to recall others associated with the sport of past times. No face more familiar at such gatherings, no individuality more intimately associated with the fortunes of the Queen's Club, can be imagined than that of Mr. Algernon Grosvenor. I remember well the founding of the club, the difficulty of setting such a project on foot, the responsibility involved by so large an enterprise, the settlement of endless details of laying out the ground, planning buildings, scrutinising estimates, interviewing lawyers, architects, contractors, all borne with equal imperturbability by Mr. Grosvenor, the real architect and founder of that popular institution.

"His nature was that of the true sportsman. If things went awry, it was to be deprecated, no doubt, but one must expect a slice of bad luck in every game, and look forward to patience, skill and dash bringing in their turn the added rewards of fortune. As he had the sportsman's nature, so he had the practice and instinct. As a performer at the pastimes which he loved, Algie Grosvenor had no master and few equals. When one recollects his prowess in the hunting-field, on the ice, on the links, at cricket, at lawn tennis, with the cue and with the gun, one's memory is feasted by a vision of rare skill and rarer grace combined with great charm of manner and of manners. No more generous game player was ever known, and none was more truly loved by his many playmates. As one of those he taught almost from infancy, an early and halting disciple, but one who tried from him to catch 'hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tools to play,' I may be permitted this poor tribute to my dear friend who never failed to play the game."

It savours of extravagance to state that each Temple Flower Show is better than its predecessor, yet the display in the Inner Temple Gardens this week may justly lay claim to be the finest of the Royal Horticultural Society's exhibitions. More room than usual was allotted to the groups of plants and flowers, and roses, hardy flowers, orchids, greenhouse plants, trees and shrubs, fruit and vegetables, were represented by perfect specimens of their kind. The space at disposal is so restricted that the display as a whole cannot be compared with Continental flower shows so far as the disposition of the exhibits

is concerned; yet it remains true that the Temple Show is the finest exposition of plants and flowers, at any rate, in Europe. We were glad to see that the method of arranging alpine plants in miniature rock gardens is gaining ground. They are far more attractive when set up in this way than when placed in boxes on staging and, what is more important to the exhibitor, they are far more likely to find a purchaser. The Veitchian Cup, the highest honour that the Temple Flower Show can give, on this occasion was awarded to Major Holford for an admirable group of orchids.

It would be a thousand pities if anything were to happen to Crosby Hall; yet its demolition seems to be at least a possibility. At any rate, it has been announced in the papers that Alderman Sir Horatio Davies, the freeholder, has sold it, and no authentic information is given as to whether the intention is to replace it by a modern bank, according to rule, or to preserve it. We earnestly trust that the latter may be the case. Crosby Hall is a fine example of domestic Gothic architecture, and has many historic associations connected with it. It was built in 1466 by Sir John Crosby on ground leased from the adjacent convent of St. Helena. After his death it was purchased from the widow by Richard Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., and became a palace. Here it was that Richard was offered the crown by the Lord Mayor and a deputation of citizens. After that Crosby Hall became the residence of Sir Thomas More, Lord High Chancellor of England, where he was frequently visited by Henry VIII. Elizabeth feasted within its walls, and as Shakespeare was a parishioner of St. Helen's it is possible that he knew it well. It escaped the Great Fire, and for ninety-two years was a meeting-place for Nonconformists. Restored in 1836, it became the headquarters of a literary society in which the Prince Consort took a lively interest. Surely a hall so closely associated with the history of England will not be allowed to pass away.

ELLAND.

Up there in Elland
In the good old days,
There were silver gleams of falling streams
And lovely woodland ways.

Up there in Elland
Down the sunny glen,
They played their plays and fought their frays,
The little fairy men.

Up there in Elland
A lass could meet her love,
And sit and sigh to a high clear sky,
And hear the cushat dove.

Up there in Elland
Oh! it's changed to-day!
For the devil's work of grime and murk
Has driven the elves away.

Up there in Elland
They've felled the bonny trees,
And poisoned all, river and fall,
Where the lovers took their ease.

Up there in Elland
The sun is never clear,
For the leaden clouds that rise like shrouds
From end to end o' the year.

Up there in Elland
A man that's living now,
A weary slave from cot to grave,
Tolls in the sweat of his brow.

Up there in Elland
Oh! for heaven again!
For a flower that blows and a stream that flows
Clean through the sunny plain!

DOROTHY FRANCES GURNEY.

The first of the considerable agricultural shows of the summer was opened at Maidenhead on Tuesday, and was remarkable for the great success achieved by King Edward. His Majesty's shorthorns were particularly successful, winning no fewer than three firsts and two seconds, in addition to the Shorthorn Society's district prize for £10, the championship for bulls and the reserve for the same, with the reserve for the best cow. He also won a first and second for Devons and a first and two reserves for Herefords. All this is very creditable to His Majesty as a farmer and to Mr. Tate, who for so long has had the management of the Royal herds at Windsor. As an exhibitor of Shires, Mr. R. W. Hudson came to the front with a fine pair of three year old stallions, while Danesfield Stonewall, the better of the two, a black stallion by Hendre Hydrometer, carried off the championship. The champion mare was found in Aldeby Lady Jameson, and belonged to Mr. Muntz. Mr. Leopold Salomons won the first prize for two year old fillies,

and Mr. Michaelis and Sir W. Greenal the first and second respectively for yearlings. The weather was bitterly cold, and this may account for the fact that the attendance at the show was scarcely so large as we have seen in some years.

The competition for the amateur championship at St. Andrews this year has been distinguished from all previous meetings of the same kind by an entry that beats the record. Next week we hope that Mr. Horace Hutchinson will be able to give our readers a detailed account of a struggle in which he played a considerable part. For the moment we must be content to note the number of exciting matches that took place. On the first day the most important contest was that between Mr. John Ball and Mr. J. E. Laidlay. The fight was close and keen, Mr. Ball going out in thirty-five strokes and Mr. Laidlay in thirty-seven. When the match was decided on the seventeenth green, it was voted by those experts present to have been as fine an exhibition of golf as had ever been witnessed on the historic links on which it was played. The second day produced several hard battles, as might be inferred from the fact that no fewer than five ex-champions had to surrender in the course of the play. Perhaps the most interesting feature of the third round was the fight between Mr. Blackwell and Mr. Graham, the curious feature being that the former was outrun during the early part of the game. The match was only decided on the nineteenth hole, when it was won by Mr. Blackwell with a putt that had all the value of an inspiration.

We are glad to be able to announce that the Zoological Society, through the generosity of Mr. W. J. Buck, has just received three fine specimens of the Great Bustard (*Otis tarda*), two males and a female. It is a long while since this interesting species was exhibited at the gardens, and we hope that an opportunity will now be afforded for visitors to witness the extraordinary display which the males of this species make during the season. During the "show off" the wings are dropped and the tail is turned upwards and forwards over the back and is held in position by the tips of the wing quills. Simultaneously the neck is drawn backwards and inflated to an enormous size by means of a huge air-sac, which opens just under the tongue into the mouth. How the work of filling is effected is unknown. About this pouch much has been written, many writers of authority having cast doubts upon its existence, while others declared that it was used as a water-bottle, which was necessitated by the predilection which these birds show for arid wastes. Since, however, it is not found in the female, this explanation should have been voted at once impossible. In the Natural History Museum at South Kensington there may be seen a very beautiful dissection made on the last male which died at the gardens some years since, showing the pouch *in situ*, and this it was which set all doubts on the subject at rest. There are but few other birds which inflate the neck by means of a special air-sac. In the majority of cases this is done by gulping air into the gullet, or crop, as in the case of the pigeon, for example.

There are many signs that England is awakening to the sense that in past years she has been wasting valuable property and opportunities through her neglect of all knowledge of forestry, and among them one of the most striking and satisfactory is the announcement that the General Board of Studies at Cambridge is on the point of electing a Reader in Forestry, whose functions will be lecturing and research into all matters connected with it. It is an appointment to be held for five years, at a salary of £400 a year, and the reader will be required to reside at Cambridge. Apart from examinations for degrees, and the ultimate earning of a livelihood, which is, perhaps, a chief part of their objects, these lectures ought to be of no little service to those sons of the "Landed Gentry" who will succeed in due course to the possession of large estates.

The severe winter through which we have lately passed has obviously favoured the life of very many of the hibernating animals, and among the kind which are appearing, perhaps rather late, but certainly in more than their usual numbers, with the long-delayed warm days of true spring, are wasps, in that queenly state in which they are preparing to reign over a hungry swarm of subjects. It is hardly necessary to say that one of these gay and golden ladies killed to-day is practically equivalent to the destruction of a whole nest later, and, indeed, so far better, as prevention is better than cure. It is not a bad plan to make known to the children in the neighbourhood that a small reward will be given for every dead queen wasp brought in. The prize money is well invested.

The dispute between President Roosevelt and Mr. W. L. Long has been misrepresented by the American correspondents of English newspapers. It arose out of a protest by Mr. John Burroughs, the oldest "open airist" in America and a close friend of the President's. And the question has some importance

here. Mr. Long, who is a man who has lived much in the wilds, is a very close observer and ought to know better, has in his later work become theatrical. Instead of following the example of Audubon, Gilbert White and other great naturalists, he tries to make his animals tell their own story, and in doing so not only fills their minds with half-human regrets, dreams and associations, but commits himself to such impossible and unnatural stories as that the caribou have a place in North Labrador to which they go to die, and that a mother eagle caught a nestling in her beak whenever it fell in its attempts to fly. Those who have with their own eyes observed wild things are fully aware that these are incidents incongruous with what we know of the animals. President Roosevelt thinks it a pity that the minds of children should be filled by such rubbish.

Some may be tempted to describe the affair as a tempest in a teapot, but no such view will be entertained by those who have given thought to the matter. "Nature faking," as Mr. Long's method has been promptly nicknamed, is a mischievous form of writing. Nor are we saying so for the first time. As Mr. Long's books have appeared, long before the intervention of President Roosevelt and Mr. John Burroughs, we have pointed out in our columns what an ill impression he was making. This criticism was offered with all the more frankness because accompanied by a full appreciation of Mr. Long's excellent gifts. We know that he has actually lived among the scenes he describes, and have recognised how close is his observation, how warm his sympathy. But this only makes his offence the worse. Of course there are among the public readers who confuse imagination with the invention of grossly improbable stories, and do not realise the very basis and foundation of truth on which the "vision and faculty divine" finds its true exercise. In the work of Thoreau, of Izaak Walton, and in that of Richard Jefferies, imagination may be seen working in its true sphere.

THE GOLDFISH.

From the German of Saphir.

How cool is the water, how sunny the ground;
Delicious through ripples to swim and to bound.
My house is of crystal, so pure and so bright;
The view through the waves is my greatest delight.
My dress is of gold, which from childhood I wore;
I've only to breathe here;—what can I want more?
All joyful I sail, and on silver I float;
My own sailor am I, and also my boat.
And likewise my rudder and pilot am I;
At hand is the harbour when danger is nigh.
And shines on the water the orb of the day,
In frolic I chase my own shadow away.
So live I, enjoying each day's new delight,
Then sweetly at night do I sleep out of sight.

MORGAN DOUGLAS.

An interesting little case was tried the other day at Enfield, where an important decision was given. It will probably go to appeal, so that we must refrain from passing any opinion upon the merits of the case; but the facts are not in dispute. A retail milk dealer was summoned by Mr. A. Liddall Bridge, the inspector under the Food and Drugs Acts for the county of Middlesex, for selling to his assistant "new cow's milk" which contained 14 per cent. of added water. The defendant pleaded that he was supplied by a farmer under contract, and that the farmer was responsible, since the milk was given under warranty. Mr. Liddall Bridge said that on April 12th he attended at Churchbury Station and saw the arrival of the 6.36 p.m. train. A churn was put out consigned to Waters, and on it was a label bearing the defendant's name and the words "Warranted pure cow's milk, six barn gallons." He took three samples of the milk, one of which was delivered to the county analyst, who stated that it contained 8 per cent. of added water.

Upon this evidence the farmer was convicted in both cases. The chairman pointed out that there was no question about the milk being adulterated with water. The Bench could not say where that was done, but he pointed out the absurdity of farmers under a contract using unsealed churns. Undoubtedly the inspector did well to examine the milk at the railway station. The great difficulty in tracing adulteration of the product is that it goes through so many hands. First there are those of the farmer and his assistants, and then at the railway there is always a chance of a part being abstracted and replaced by water, unless the churns are sealed. Adulteration has been known to take place in a dairy and has not infrequently been discovered to have taken place at the hands of the retailer. Thus the efficient inspector ought to obtain samples at all the different stages of the milk from the cow to the purchaser. That is the only way of detecting the fraud.

SEA-BIRDS AND FISH.

OME of the longshoremen or their descendants in East Anglia are very much excited at the present moment. For some years past an embargo has been placed on the collection of eggs; but this year it has been removed by the orders of the County Council, owing to the complaints that have been made of the depredations which these birds commit upon the fish supply. Wishing to ascertain the views of the various people interested in the matter, we paid a visit to Aldeburgh on Saturday last. This pleasant and somewhat melancholy old town, with half of its ancient houses now submerged, so that the fine old town hall, which has been illustrated in our pages, instead of being in the centre of the town, now stands in lonely beauty on the beach, is a very excellent place in which to look into the subject. Nor could it be more attractive than it is at the present moment. The gorse on the surrounding common is afire, and on the hawthorns of field and hedgerow the white blossom is these much-watered marshes are gay

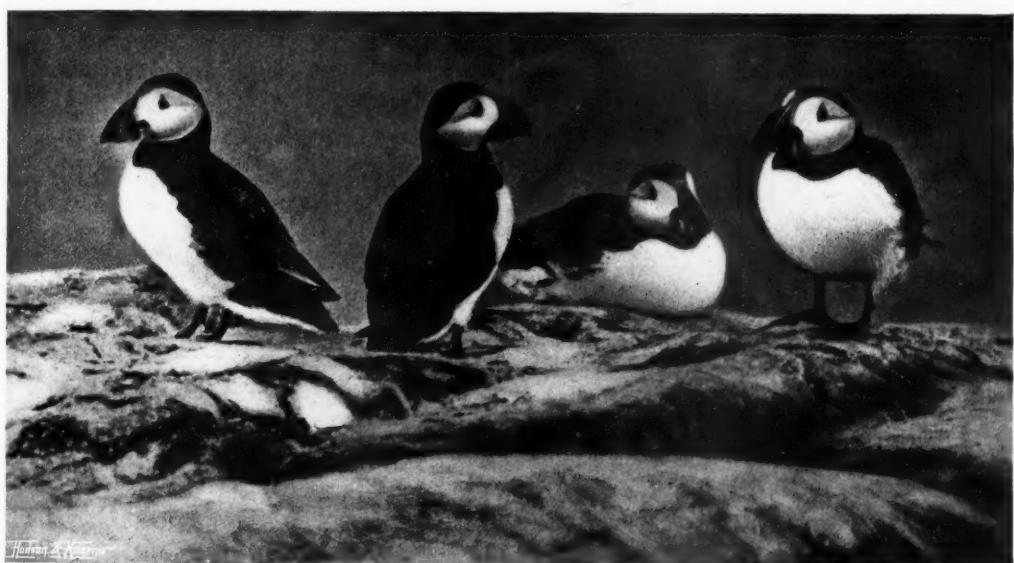


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Copyright.

just breaking, while with a million wild

A TERN SITTING.



O. G. Pike.

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flowers and tuneful with the songs of birds. Here, indeed, land-birds and studied at one and the same time, for while the lark is heard rising from the rough bent grass and carolling its happy song, the redshank, with the long red legs which provided it with a name, sits on the sea-bank and scolds vigorously at the intruder who has ventured too near its nest. Swallows skim the river, while the sea-swallows, as the tern is called further North, may be seen, like kestrels, climbing into the air, and dropping like a stone upon their prey in the water. In order to investigate the matter, we took a boat and sailed, one day, down to what was once the busy town of Orford, but is now something between a beautiful village and the *disjecta membra* of a partly-vanished city. On another we sailed upwards as far as Snape, where the Alde, which stretches to the width of a mile in high water and contracts to a few yards between its mud-flats when the tide is back, is narrowed to a slender stream, on the banks of which are the great maltworks that constitute the chief, if not the only, industry

of Snape. If the sea-birds were to be tried only as contributors to the beauty of the scene there would be no doubt whatever of their acquittal. The Alde, when we go from Aldeburgh downwards towards Orford, is more like a great estuary of the sea than a river. Indeed, at starting there is only a bank of shingle between it and the sea, which comes tumbling over between the cottages in wild weather, so that as much as 3ft. of shingle have had to be removed from one of the houses. A little further down, however, this division widens out into a marsh so large that two marshmen are engaged upon it to tend the sheep and cattle in the summer, though at times they have to fly before the assault of the waves. The old salt who was in charge of our boat was nothing loth to speak of the sea-birds and their doings. He is a native of the place, and has been little away from it except during winter, when he joins a fishing fleet; he has, in the course of his

avocation, gone as far North as Iceland for cod. During the summer he is skipper of one of the best of the larger sailing-boats



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GREAT BLACK-BACKED GULL

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devoted to the use of the tourist and the pleasure-seeker. Like all of his kind, he is perfectly certain that the fishing has suffered grievously from the toll exacted by the sea-birds. It is true that he had little to say against the cormorant, which elsewhere is considered the greediest and worst of the marauders. The cormorant does not flourish except where there are rocks, and in the course of our wanderings we did not come across a single specimen, although a little further north the whole sea would have been found dotted with them.

His anger was chiefly directed against the terns, thought by many to be the most beautiful and graceful of all the fowls that derive their food from the sea. His chief grievance was that they took so many smelts, and at its proper season smelt-fishing is one of the



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AN OYSTER-CATCHER.

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F. J. Martin. THE RETURN TO THE NEST. Copyright.

chief industries on the Alde; but he was also sure that they carried away vast numbers of sprats, and the catch of sprats is another considerable industry. Behind the sea-birds is, of course, the steam trawler, and as far as we are able to bear witness—and this is spoken with a considerable knowledge of fishermen in the extreme West of England—in the South, in the East and in the North there is not the shadow of a difference of opinion as to the immense injury done to our fishing-grounds by the trawlers. The steam trawl has been brought to such a pitch of perfection that after it has swept the floor of the sea practically nothing remains. At Lowestoft some 80 per cent. of the marked fish placed in the water were picked up by the trawlers. It was bad enough when the trawling fleets were comparatively small and few in number, but now they have multiplied and extended so that nearly every country in the world sends them

out, and there is not a fishing-ground extant that has not suffered from them. They undoubtedly kill incalculable quantities of small fish, and the argument of our informant was that if the destruction accomplished by them was supplemented by the pilferings of the sea-fowl, fishing would soon become an extinct calling. He admitted cheerfully that somewhat better prices were obtained to-day than used to be prevalent; but what was the use of this unless quantities could be got? Indeed, the proportion of plunder

allotted to the fishermen seems to be absurdly small in comparison with that taken by the middlemen and the vendors of fish. Cod, for example, he told us, was usually sold by him at from 1d. to 2d. per pound, while its present price to the consumer is often from 4d. to 7d.

If something is not done soon it is evident that the days of the line fishermen are numbered. All the same, one did not feel quite convinced that the evil was to be attributed to the terns. In the course of his remarks the fisherman acknowledged it to be a grievance that "egging" had been discontinued for some years past. He told the story of a man who had made £15 in a single week out of terns' eggs, which our informant said were sent up to London and sold as plovers' eggs. This may or may not be the case. It is, of course, quite possible that the sum mentioned might have been earned by collecting terns' eggs. The nests here are mostly made on the shingle and are not very difficult to locate. Indeed, in the course of our wanderings, we came upon a man who was the fortunate owner of a small black spaniel. This dog was not only able to find the nests, but would carry an egg in its mouth without breaking it. Dogs in this part



F. J. Martin. TURNING HER EGGS OVER. Copyright.

of the world are not infrequently employed for the purpose of finding eggs, especially those of the plover, but it is usual to keep them on a long string, as otherwise they would break the eggs. But this was an animal of an exceptionally fine mouth, and we saw him bring the eggs out of a tern's nest without breaking one. It may be worth while to note that the usual way of inducing a dog to retrieve eggs is to break one over his mouth. This gives him the scent, which he will follow most faithfully afterwards. The opinion of the fisherman has been stated, but we do not altogether agree with it; and the local naturalist who was consulted gave it as his opinion that the damage done by the beautiful terns is really small. He had no hesitation in saying that the fishermen and others engaged in collecting eggs were only too glad to make out a case against them because "egging" was a lucrative source of income. He considered that the damage done by terns to the smelts and sprats was scarcely worth mentioning. He considered that the sinners were the cormorants further North and the various species of gulls in the immediate neighbourhood. The damage done by such birds as the razor-bill and the puffin he did not think worth mentioning. Another point that he raised seems decidedly worth attention. It is that if the men are allowed to go out egg-hunting no species is safe. They will gather all the eggs that come in their way. All this was passing through the mind of the observer when the next day he made an inland voyage up the river past Ikon to Snape. It was charming to observe the birds on the way. Already some of the sheldrakes had hatched out, and we observed one pair of these handsome ducks with a company of young swimming in their wake. Many single birds were seen questing about for food, their mates at the time, no doubt, sitting on eggs. We saw, too, a cock feeding a hen. This bird is a very assiduous husband, and carries food not only to his youngsters, but to his mate as well. The district is noted for herons, and although at the moment they are breeding at inland heronies, many specimens were to be seen rising from reed-beds and floating away on their wide strong wings. Evidently, too, many of the ducks were sitting, as we saw considerable flights made up of drakes only. When the mother duck is sitting on her young the ducks collect together and forage for food in company. Seagulls winging their way hither and thither were constantly visible, but not in such numbers as one would have expected to see further North. The whole scene, however, was one of exquisite beauty, in which the birds were a very considerable factor, and one cannot help regretting that a way should be laid open whereby the collector of eggs will be in a position to diminish considerably the number of birds on our estuaries and coasts.

It is to be feared that the accusation made against many of the sea-birds of diminishing the supply of fish is one that can be proved up to the hilt. Yet it is contrary to all our notions of justice that a sweeping verdict should be passed without due trial having been held. And no one who has really studied the question will admit for a moment that the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries has done its duty in the matter. No proper enquiry has been held as to the nature and diet of the various species of wild birds that frequent our coasts. What has been done is that the opinions of certain more or less distinguished naturalists have been reproduced and given official authority; but here, as elsewhere, it is absolutely true that doctors disagree, and no two naturalists appear to have the same opinion about any given bird. The truth of the matter is that none of them has studied ornithology with this end in view, nor indeed are they fully conscious of the amount of study that would be required to reach an answer to the question that would be even approximately correct. The diet of birds varies according to a considerable number of conditions. It is not always the same, for example, when they are feeding their young, as when the young are matured and join in the flocks of their elders to go foraging for provisions. It is not the same in winter as in summer. It is not the same in every locality. Before allowing the birds to be robbed and slaughtered in a way that seems inevitable unless something is done, the Fisheries Department of the Board of Agriculture ought to take the matter up and subject it to a thorough investigation.

FROM THE FARMS.

AN AUSTRALIAN LAYING COMPETITION.

IT is not very creditable to British poultry-keepers that Australian laying competitions are at once more thorough and more successful than those held in this country. Particulars are just to hand of the fifth annual egg-laying competition conducted by Mr. D. S. Thompson, Government Poultry Expert at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College. This is the fifth of five tests of twelve months' duration, organised by the *Sydney Daily Telegraph*, and each has shown a steady advance on the one before. The number of eggs laid by each hen in the winning pen has increased from 185 to over 246, while the average return of the hens has risen from 130 to 171. This is amazingly good, a return of 1,481 eggs from six hens in twelve months being unknown in this country. These birds were Langshans, imported direct



O. G. Pile.

KITTIWAKE AND YOUNG.

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from China; but two pens of white Leghorns were not far behind, with records of 1,437 and 1,373 respectively, while a pen of Golden Wyandottes were fourth, with a very creditable total of 1,335 eggs, or an average of 239 per hen. For the present year an entirely new experiment is being carried out; forty of the pens competing in the last have been retained, and a two-year competition will end next March, the first ever held, just as the Hawkesbury College, five years ago, was the first to initiate twelve months' competitions. In future all the egg-laying trials will extend over a period of two years, or the full extent of the profitable life of a hen. Meanwhile poultry-keepers in this country have not got beyond the sixteen weeks' competition organised yearly by the Utility Poultry Club. That these are of great value and have done a vast deal of good must be admitted, but we ought not to let Australian poultry-keepers be more enterprising than ourselves. It may be argued that the difference in climate may explain the big scores made; but it is an undoubted fact that hens in a temperate climate like Great Britain lay better than those in a sub-tropical climate like

Australia; heat is a greater handicap than cold, and Australia can legitimately boast that it possesses the finest laying strains in the world.

C. D. L.

HARVEST WEATHER FORECASTS.

We are informed by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries that during the harvest the Meteorological Office will, as before, supply forecasts of the weather by telegraph to persons desirous of receiving them, upon payment of the cost of the telegrams. The forecasts will be so worded that the cost of each message will be 6d. for any one district, including an address of three words. The harvest forecasts are prepared at 3.30 p.m. daily, from June 1st to September 30th (except Sundays), and are applicable to the twenty-four hours from midnight following the time of issue. The director of the Meteorological Office, in view of the importance of checking the accuracy of the harvest forecasts, is willing to supply to those recipients who signify their willingness to co-operate in the matter forms on which records of the weather experienced may be entered, for the purpose of comparing the forecasts with the weather subsequently experienced. It would have considerably enhanced the value of the document in which this information is contained if a summary of the forecasts of last year and the weather accompanying them had been added to it.

THE SITUATION IN WHEAT.

Undoubtedly, at the present moment, tidings in regard to wheat are of an almost dramatic interest. It is, no doubt, owing purely to the habits and manners of the present day that the rise in prices has occurred. At any rate, it has nothing whatever to do with the present supply, but may be traced solely to what is considered to be the impending scarcity. Even so, the matter is one of guesswork pure and simple. At the moment the outlook may be, and undoubtedly is, dark; but, should fine weather supervene, nothing is so far gone but that it might be remedied. In Europe, from Russia to the West of Germany, there was a very severe winter, which undoubtedly has checked the growth of wheat. In Russia a very severe frost occurring towards the end of January was productive of much harm, and this effect extended to Roumania, Hungary, Austria and Germany. Since then the spring has not been at all favourable to the development of this crop, and the consequence is that it does not look at all well. In South-Eastern Europe hot and dry weather has followed the spring, so that we cannot expect any supply from that quarter. For some years past India has figured as a very considerable source of our wheat supply, but, unfortunately, it has been exposed to very heavy

rains, and we are not likely to be able to import anything like the quantity which, on an average, has come to this country from India during the last few years. Russia, which until now has supplied a considerable amount of our wheat, has been contending with famine, and for some time past has been obliged to import grain for its own use, so that it is very doubtful indeed if we can expect much from the territory of the Czar. The hope of those who desire a cheap food supply centres in the United States or Canada. But unless the season is very favourable the crop there is likely to be under the average. Our hopes, then, are concentrated upon the Argentine and Australia. In these two countries the prospects are as good as can possibly be desired; but as the only chance of cheap wheat rests on them, it would almost seem inevitable that high prices must endure during the whole of the present year.

THE SCOTTISH SMALL HOLDINGS BILL.

In Scotland it is evident that much dissatisfaction has been caused by the Small Holdings Bill introduced by Mr. Sinclair. It is considered that the proposal of the Government to pass this, a valuation Bill only, is a confession that they had not quite mastered the elements of the situation. Over the great part of lowland Scotland there has sprung into existence a number of associations created for the special purpose of opposing the measure. These bodies have been federated, and have issued a resolution of which the following is the text: "This association, having considered the general effect of the Small Landholders (Scotland) Bill, 1907, which introduces into Great Britain, where the conditions are totally different from those of Ireland, many of the evil features of the Irish Land Act of 1881, and which, if carried for Scotland, will be used as a precedent for similar retrograde legislation in England, condemns the Bill as introducing a mischievous system of dual ownership, as preventing the application of landlords' capital to the soil, as setting up an unnecessary and expensive Land Court to interfere between land owners and tenants, as involving increased burdens, not only on local ratepayers, but on the national taxpayers, and as injurious to the prosperity and progress of agriculture; and urges all members of Parliament interested in the welfare of agriculture to oppose its being passed into law while containing these objectionable provisions." Farmers are joining in numbers to fight the Bill, while there is no movement whatever in its favour. The alternative proposed by Mr. Munro Ferguson and Sir Edward Tennant is looked upon much more favourably than the original measure. It would appear that the Government would be well advised in withdrawing the measure.

A BOOK OF

THE WEEK.

AMONG the books that appear from time to time, one that is always sure of a hearty welcome is Sir Herbert Maxwell's *Memories of the Months* (Arnold). Sir Herbert needs no introduction to these columns. He is one who has played many parts in his time, but the one in which he appears to us in the best light is that of a country gentleman; but he is very far removed from a commonplace example of what, with memories of Squire Weston in our minds, we are apt to consider the ordinary type. To his genuine love of Nature and interest in all that she produces, his keenness as a sportsman and his wide sympathy as a naturalist, is to be added that love of books and good writing which sheds a halo of interest over all the rest. For it cannot be denied that the country gentleman as a rule is inarticulate. He may, like Wordsworth's Ploughman, see "a glory in the grass, a splendour in the flower," but his delight is for the greater part unconscious; he lacks the gift of expression. Not so with Sir Herbert Maxwell. We can scarcely fancy him divorced from a library; and we feel sure that when his day's work is over his favourite occupation is to retire to it and pore over the books, in which he takes a delight as great as that which he draws from field and farm. Even when recounting an incident of fishing or other sport it is not unusual for him to be struck by some apt quotation or bit of learning, till the effect is produced of one who carries his books in his pocket. And yet where he falls short is in what one would call his poetic interpretation of Nature. His mind delights in out-of-the-way facts and bits of knowledge, but it is very seldom that there come to him those moments of inspiration in which feeling counts for so much and knowledge for so little. But even this cannot be said, without some qualification. There are many passages in the book which show that Sir Herbert Maxwell has an exquisite appreciation of natural facts. Take the following description, for example, of a winter morning at Monreith:

Not a breath was stirring; there was more cloud than clear in the sky; but it was high, fleecy cloud, *cirrus* and *cirrostratus*. The air was full of sound, for the wild fowl were just returning from their supper-parties in the marshes and springs, and were settling on the water with much conversation and splash. There was the mallard's homely quack, the musical whistle of the teal, the wilder *whew* of the widgeon; besides which I could recognise

the notes of diving ducks, who are content to take their meals at home—that is, where they spend the day.

A Richard Jefferies would have stopped there; but the beauty of the morning is not allowed to interfere with the writer's curiosity in regard to facts. He goes on, in a descent to the commonplace, to remark that it is a puzzling thing why certain ducks, mallard, widgeon, teal, gadwall, shovellers, etc., feed only on the surface, never diving to secure the choicest morsel if it lies deeper than the length of their necks. He devotes a section to discussing the question why water-fowl invariably fall into the V formation when taking a prolonged flight. He says quite truly that other gregarious birds, such as rooks, plovers and pigeons, do not adopt it. His ingenious explanation is as follows:

If they were to follow in a disorganised crowd, they must jostle one another, for they are heavy in proportion to their size, with no power of soaring, keeping themselves aloft by rapid strokes of relatively short wings. Jostling would be dangerous work, for these wings are exceedingly powerful, as I realised last spring when a "cob" or male swan, seizing with his bill the wing of another cob which had approached imprudently near the young brood, battered him to death by repeated wing-strokes. The head of the unfortunate ruler was one mass of bloody bruises. There is good cause, then, for all water-fowl, from the lordly whooper to the diminutive teal, to avoid striking their comrades in flight; so, to conform with the obligation to keep an eye on the leader, each bird in the flock has to fly outside the bird in front. The leader is followed by two birds; the two next keep outside the first pair; the third pair outside the second; and so on to the last pair, widely separated from one another at the rearward extremity of the V. Sir Thomas Browne himself did not possess more of this self-same curiosity. Sir Herbert works quite in the style of that master. "What bird did Chaucer mean by 'the crow with voice of care'?" and comes to the conclusion that it must have been a rook. He is also exercised to understand what flower Milton had in mind when he wrote about "the tufted crow-toe," and he answers:

Probably the birdfoot trefoil, sometimes called crow-toes; but in Scotland the wild blue hyacinth is known as crow-taes, from the fancied resemblance of the unexpanded flower-thryse to a crow's foot, and in England "crow-foot" is a common name for the buttercup.

The wild blue hyacinth, by the by, is a misnomer. He means bluebell. His book is a thing of shreds and patches; in fact, an



TAPERING STOLES.

alternative title might have been "The Table Talk of a Naturalist," and, therefore, no apology is needed for turning over to an interesting account of an experiment with badgers. He turned down some at Monreith twenty years ago, but they disappeared; his shooting tenant turned down some more in 1906. The following was the result:

About midsummer, the keepers were dismayed by wholesale massacre committed by night upon the young pheasants in coops, and not upon them alone but upon the nursing hens. The mischief was soon traced to the badgers; but, watch as they might, the keepers could never detect them in the act. Isolated coops with a solitary hen in each were put out encircled by traps. Master Brock was equal to that device. Somehow or other he got at the coop uninjured, threw the coop over upon the traps, and devoured the inmate. After that, I had no word to say in defence of my quondam friends. They were dug out of their earth and paid the penalty of evil-doers.

Although the nights are arranged in the order of the months, Sir Herbert is nothing if not discursive. In April he has the following interesting note about the names of the quail:

The triple note of the male bird has earned for the quail many quaint names in various languages. Among the Southern English it is known as "Wet-my-lips"; Germans call it *Huck den Rück* ("Bend your back"); and in Heligoland the call is imitated by the phrase *Plück de Büx* ("Mend our breeches").

THE OLD DIVINITY

OXFORD and Cambridge are different from all other Universities. On the Continent, in America, in Scotland, there is one great institution to which all its members alike belong, which has its lecture-rooms, its library, its offices; but in the two old English Universities the most prominent buildings are the colleges, all of which are parts of the University, and yet quite independent foundations. Hence the visitor from other Universities often says: "You have showed me this college and that college, but where is the University itself?" The answer is that the University is everywhere, that all the colleges are its component parts and that within their walls is conducted most of the teaching and of the other business which elsewhere is done in one common centre. But this is not the whole answer. The University of Oxford has buildings of its own, which belong to no college, but which are the common property of all members of the University. In these are conducted those parts of the University business which concern all its members alike, its more advanced teaching, its examinations, its acts as one great corporation. And of these buildings by far the most famous block is the one which stands between the east end of Broad Street and St. Mary's Church. There are found the Sheldonian Theatre, which Oxford uses for its most important functions, the Bodleian Library, the most famous of all its institutions, and the building which is at once the oldest and the most beautiful of its teaching "schools"—the Divinity School. The connection of this site with academic life in Oxford dates in part from the earliest days of the University; but Oxford had been a famous seat of learning for more than two centuries before any of the present buildings were erected. The greatest days of Oxford, when its doctors were among the intellectual leaders of Europe, were already past when the University began to take measures to house itself worthily. In fact, it was not till the fifteenth century that Oxford conceived the great project of building a "school" for the special work of its most famous department, that of theology. To quote the picturesque words of a contemporary letter, "The mercy of the Holy Spirit inspired the devout hearts of certain individuals, to open their liberal hands to raise new schools in our University, of beautiful workmanship, and they gave most liberally of their wealth for so acceptable a work." The first we hear of this is in 1423, and almost at once it became apparent that the University, like the man in the parable, had not counted the cost; it had "begun to build and was not able to finish." The work was on such a scale that outside help was immediately needed, and money seems to have been as hard to raise in the fifteenth century as it is in the twentieth. The records of Oxford for more than fifty years consist largely of what must be called "begging letters." Everyone who had money and was thought to be likely to be liberal with it was importuned for the good work; sometimes it is an archbishop or bishop who is approached; sometimes the executors of a pious and wealthy man lately deceased are asked to give some of his charity for the furtherance of so good an object. The University now appeals to Parliament, now to a popular London clergyman, who is told that "we understand many citizens of your famous city have such devotion to your wise counsel that if you knock at their hearts, they open them, if you advise, they consent" and so on.

The agreement to begin building was signed in 1429, when it was arranged that the superintendent should have a retaining fee of 40s. a year, and 4s. for every week that he was at work in Oxford; but the money soon ran short, and the work had to be stopped for a time. It was resumed again with new vigour in

Again, this little account of birds hissing is interesting, although the facts are very well known. They seem to establish the relationship of the bird and the snake:

Many birds hiss if disturbed when sitting on their nests. The gander and the male mute-swan (the cob as he is technically called) hiss to warn intruders away from their sitting mates or young brood. And the ruse is very successful; even the little blue-tit often succeeds in causing the hurried withdrawal of the prying hand, for hissing is closely associated, in the human intelligence, probably in great measure by heredity, with the presence of a hideous reptile. But the hiss of a bird is not the same as that of the "gods" in a theatre. The human hiss is a sibilant, produced by the expulsion of air between the tip of the tongue and the upper incisors, the hiss of a bird is a sharp guttural, as may be seen by watching a gander which produces the sound with his bill pretty wide open.

In June we find the following exquisite little piece from Romsdal:

To-day how different is the scene! The cloud curtain has roiled away, the glorious sun blazes upon the valley, every pinnacle and peak stands clear cut against the blue. The snow field aloft is sweating freely; a score of cascades swing from the cliffs like milky ropes; from time to time a sudden, dull boom marks the discharge of an avalanche, or a crash and a harsh rattle as of musketry come from rock-fall thousands of feet overhead. The bands of winter, long enduring, are loosening at last.

SCHOOL AT OXFORD.

the next generation, when the University (in 1447) succeeded in getting a grant of 500 marks from the executors of Cardinal Beaufort, who prudently stipulated that the work must be finished in five years or the money was to be refunded. The work was not finished in the time; but it is quite certain the money was not refunded, although a commission of twelve men "wise and experienced in building" were appointed to see to it. To aid their labours the most extraordinary measures were adopted; "graces" were to be given to (i.e., in modern phrase, degrees were to be conferred on) "good and honourable persons" who would contribute, all non-residents were taxed (it is more than doubtful if they ever paid), and the fines levied by the proctors were to be applied "to the building of the new schools." It is sad to notice that the promise of the University that the name of Cardinal Beaufort should ever be remembered in its religious services has not been observed; the list of University benefactors, as recited on Commemoration Sunday, begins not with the Cardinal, but with his enemy and rival, the "good" Duke Humphry of Gloucester. The Duke's name is especially connected with the Divinity School, which has the oldest part of the Bodleian, "Duke Humphry's library," superimposed over it. Forty years were spent in begging before the work was completed, for the school was not finished till 1489.

It need hardly be said that in style it belongs to the best period of Perpendicular; a glance at the windows is sufficient to show this. It may fairly be quoted in support of the late Professor Freeman's dictum that the Perpendicular style was the climax of English architecture. The work, when finished, was worthy of the long labour. It is not only the most beautiful room in Oxford; it ranks high among the architectural glories of England at once for its magnificence and also for the wonderful skill shown in its construction. The problem of covering so large a space without supporting pillars was solved in the beautiful lierne vaulting of the roof, and Oxford may claim to have introduced the principle of supporting transverse arches, which was carried still further in that "masterpiece of English masonry," Henry VII.'s Chapel at Westminster. The roof of the Divinity School, with its pendants carved with the arms of benefactors, is, undoubtedly, in our day the most beautiful feature of the building; but it must be remembered that its other glories have been spoiled or swept away by the vandalism or the mistaken taste of later generations. The present Perpendicular windows, graceful as they are, look rather cold and bare; but they were once filled with the best glass that fifteenth century England could produce; in order to get room for as much of it as possible the supporting buttresses are especially long and thin. This glass was broken by the reforming zeal of Edward VI.'s "Visitors," when even the lead in the windows was taken away and nettles and brambles grew about the walls. And the beautiful fifteenth century fittings, the professor's chair, "a fair piece of polished work," to quote Antony Wood, "erected on pillars of stone curiously wrought, with a canopy of carved wood," and the other benches corresponding, were swept away after the Restoration by Dr. Fell of unpopular memory, who introduced, with the help of Sir Christopher Wren, the present incongruous oak woodwork. Wren is great enough to have his mistakes forgiven him; over against the Divinity School stands his own Sheldonian Theatre; but the fact remains that here he lent himself to a deplorable "restoration." It was at this time that the present north door was built, so as to give easier access to the Sheldonian opposite. The great convenience of this may well warrant the departure from the original design, and the beauty of the room has gained rather than lost by the alteration.



THE OLD DIVINITY SCHOOL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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The building whose erection cost so much time and so much trouble, has hardly had a history of corresponding interest. Its very magnificence and the fact that it was especially devoted to Divinity have perhaps prevented it from being used on many occasions when the less splendid "schools" of the University were being employed for public gatherings. During the seventeenth century Parliament frequently met at Oxford, but only once in the Divinity School; this was in 1625, when the first

a committee of Religion." In so theological a century as the seventeenth we need hardly go so far afield to find a cause for Parliamentary meddling with religion. But whether the precedent was thought dangerous or not, in later Parliaments the Divinity School was used only for committees, nor was it till the eighteenth century (when, for example, the unfortunate Miss Blandy was condemned to death there for poisoning her father) that the Divinity School was used for a law court. It escaped



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NORTH SIDE OF OLD DIVINITY SCHOOL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Parliament of Charles I. was transferred to Oxford on account of the Plague in London. This was called the "empty Parliament" (*Parliame.tum vanum*), because it did nothing; and Antony Wood quaintly observes that "this giving up the Divinity School unto the use of the House of Commons, and placing the Speaker near the Professor's (of Divinity) chair, did first put them into a conceit that the determining of all points and controversies did belong to them," "for after this we find no Parliament without

also other and still more degrading usages. When King Charles made Oxford the Royalist capital of England, the Logic School became a corn store and the Music School a magazine for his army clothing department, but the Divinity School was spared. It was, in fact, mainly used for academic purposes, especially those connected with the theological degrees; and however interesting these are to those who take part in them, they are not of burning interest to the public in general. It is true that,



'COUNTRY LIFE.'

THE SCHOOL FROM THE EAST END.

Copyright.

in the stormy days of the seventeenth century, the theological disputes had a political importance, and the defence of the royal prerogative in books like Montagu's "Appello Cæsarem" brought the proceedings in the Divinity School into the struggles of the time; but all these controversies sound very faint and far off to the modern reader, and almost equally so are the struggles in the days of the Tractarian Movement, when all Oxford was convulsed by the lawsuit of Mr. Macmullen against the Regius Professor of Divinity, the famous Dr. Hampden, who had refused to allow him to read his thesis in the Divinity School because he was suspected (and with reason) of Romish tendencies.

But this theological association of the school was the cause of its being the scene of part of the best-known series of events in the whole history of Oxford—the trials of Archbishop Cranmer and his brother bishops, Ridley and Latimer, for heresy during the reign of Queen Mary. It was to this building on April 16th, 1554, that Cranmer, Ridley and Latimer were summoned to maintain their doctrine of the Blessed Sacrament against the whole force of the Roman doctors, reinforced for the occasion by the theologians of Cambridge. The proceedings were far from seemly, for there were "hissings and noises, confused talk and argument," so that Ridley, with true English pride, complained that "when he studied at Paris, he remembered what clamours there used to be at the Sorbonne, where Popery chiefly reigned; but that that was a kind of modesty in comparison of this thrasonical ostentation." But it is only just to observe that even an audience prejudiced by the most bitter *odium theologicum* were impressed by Cranmer's dignity and learning. The president, Dr. Weston, said, "His wonderful gentle behaviour and modesty was worthy much commendation, giving him most hearty thanks in his own name and in the name of all his brethren. At which all the doctors put off their caps." The questions with which Cranmer "puzzled his opponents most heavily" (as his biographer, Strype, says), seem to modern ears most irreverent and unconvincing; but all can admire the bravery of a great man fallen on evil times, and be thankful that his opponents, too, forgot for a moment that

they were theologians, in respect for the behaviour and the learning of the aged archbishop. The Divinity School has sad associations with another archbishop, for it was there that the body of Juxon lay in state in 1663, when the University of Oxford gave him a splendid funeral. The magnificence of the ceremonial, described by Antony Wood, seems as strange in our more prosaic modern days as does the bitterness of the invective against the Presbyterians with which the public orator, the great preacher South, disfigured his funeral speech. In our own time the Divinity School has more commonplace uses. It is still one of the show-places of Oxford, as it was in the seventeenth century; and it is employed for meetings of the University Parliament, Congregation, when the gathering of graduates is too large for the ordinary Convocation House and too small for the Sheldonian Theatre. It was thus the scene of the warm debates on the proposed admission of women to degrees, when that subject distracted Oxford twelve years ago. During the late election of a Chancellor it was used for the issue of voting papers, and for the robing of graduates who came up to vote in the Sheldonian; its use for elections, Parliamentary and other, dates back for more than 200 years.

It is characteristic of Oxford that its four great places or meeting date from four different periods, and have each of them associations with famous men. The Divinity School, as we have seen, belongs to Pre-Reformation Oxford, and is associated with the names of Cardinal Beaufort and Archbishop Cranmer; the Convocation House was Laud's gift to the University; the Sheldonian Theatre is the memorial of the munificence of another archbishop. The new schools, erected in our day, were built out of the ordinary revenues of Oxford, and have had little time to gather memories round them; but the University has begun the custom—may it long be continued—of commemorating by mural tablets those who have deserved well of Oxford and the State; only Sir Thomas Acland and Cecil Rhodes have as yet been honoured in this way. Oxford has played no inconsiderable part in the history of England, and that part is reflected and illustrated in her great buildings.

J. WELLS.

WOLD CONJURER BOWBRIDGE.

JOE PRIDDY told me the story of this celebrated—for so he was throughout two counties—magician. Joe Priddy was one of those old-fashioned labourers who could turn his hand to any work to be found on a farm. He was at hedging and ditching when I met him; but it was noon, and he had seated himself on a faggot to eat his "nammit" in the warm sun of early spring. He was an alert elderly man with red hair, a pair of blue-grey eyes and a short grizzly beard, with a stain of tobacco around his lips from the short clay which he always smoked bowl downwards. He wore the most beautiful variegated waistcoat that ever was seen, and long gaiters reaching far above the knee.

"What, old Conjuror Bowbridge! Now to think you should bring up he. Where did er live then? Now, for certain sure, everybody do know the sort o' shed about a mile on the north side o' Honeycombe and the tumble-down wall close by, where there was once a long strip o' garden. A good-sized marl-pit, full o' water summer an' winter, do lie at the end o' that. You can zee but little o' it now under the bushes and tall elem trees. But 'twas all open once and gi'ed the name to the place, 'Black Pond.'

"To look at it to-day you would hardly believe that shed had ever a-bin a dwelling. But that was the house of the old Conjuror Bowbridge, and that was his garden, and that was his pond.

"He was a tall old man, so lean as a rail, wi' long white locks o' hair that did cover his ears. He had a long white beard halfway down his waistcoat, that did blow about in the wind a'most like the flag 'pon church-tower when he did stand out in road of a rough day. For, rain or shine, hail, blow or freeze, weather didn't make no difference at all to he. In that pond he had a-got a girt jack-feesh, zo long as your arm, that did come when he did shake the water wi' a hazel-stick, an' feed a'most close up to his hand. Many did think the feesh mus' be his fermiyer, an' did tell un what he did know. He had a tame raven, too, most times a-hopping about the drashel or a-perched up 'pon his shoulder, zo black as zoot beside the wold head o' un zo white as flour. Some thought that such times the raven did whisper in the ear o' un.

"Nobody wouldn't live in such a lonely, outlandish place no more, a'der the wold Conjuror Bowbridge had a-been moved out o' it. 'Twur a bit lonesome, for certain sure, but I do count 'tweden that. Nobody didn't know what pranks the wold chap had a-bin up to to 'quire all his larnen. He didn't read it all out o' books, I don't never believe. There, he never couldn'. Most folk thought he mus' ha' got his knowledge like, day by day, by word o' mouth. Maybe they was afriad that if the wold Scratch

had a-bin used to drop in an' spend a hour wi' the wold Conjuror of a-night, he might think hizzelf welcome to come in an' zit down wr' any new tenant for all time to come. Anybeddy don't want to make a friend o' he, you know. He mid pay anybeddy the compliment one o' these days to ax 'em roun' to warm their noses by his vireside. An' who better able to do it?

"There have a-bin hundreds an' thousands o' volk in trouble have a-traipsed along they vower roads to consult wi' Conjuror Bowbridge. If a man had a cow bad, or his missus or woone o' the childern did vall into zome complaint, an' waste an' pine away to nothen, wi' a bucket o' doctor's stuff in their inside, an' all noo good, he did come if 'twur twenty mile to get the real truth o' it out o' Conjuror Bowbridge. Why he cured John Priddy o' the nannywiper in the stomach. Conjuror could always tell folk, too, whe'er or not they was overlooked. An' he had a fore-knowledge when anybeddy was on the road to his place. He didn't wait till they did come an' knock to door. He'd stand by the house right out in the middle o' the square like o' the vower-cross-roads, an' then he did walk out to meet 'em, an' look 'em in the face, an' tell 'em their business right out, like readen off of a book. You couldn't deceive the wold Conjuror Bowbridge.

"An' the wold Conjuror Bowbridge he could rule the planets and cast 'tivities to tell your future like; and he did pick herbs all in season, an' make a wonderful ointment o' different things a-picked under the full moon, that did cure waxen-kernels an' sore necks, an' spots on the face an' all such-like. He didn't never zell that partic'lar ointment. He did gi'e it a free gift to anybeddy at the very minute they did first catch sight of a new moon. Why, sometimes of a night there 'ud be folk a-traipsing all vower ways to be up at the vower-cross-roads just afore the new moon did rise. There mid be up a score, all a-waiting wi' their heads down an' their eyes a-shut, to look up one at a time on the very nick when he did clap a little pot o' thik ointment into their palms.

"But more than anything the wold Conjuror Bowbridge did excel when anybeddy had a-had anything a-stoled. He could work such a spell that any thief, anywhere, at any time an' whatever he might be about, was bound to get up just as he might be an' carr' the thing he had a-tookt straight back to the place he had a-tookt it from. He couldn't help hisself. But the wold Conjuror Bowbridge did never allow any rogue to be found out by his means. He did make 'em put it back in the dead o' night. An' 'twere a thing well-known, that more an' one thief had a-bin fo'ced to get up in his night-gown an' walk up five mile or more wi' the property over hedge an' through ditch straight as a crow

do fly. Nobody ever saw 'em, but Conjuror Bowbridge said so hisself. He said he did work only for good, an' no thief that he did take in han' should suffer the law.

"Well, there were a-many about o' the better sort didn't hold with Conjuror an' his ways. All the gentry did call the man a rogue. Ah! But they that had to bear the brunt o' life, mind, did know well he could be a true friend. For he did take no money for his magic. Though to be sure he'd sell herbs an' teas an' salves that he did make hisself at the full o' the moon or whatever time he did know to be best. Or he'd take pay for casting of a 'tivity, to be sure he would. But then, the folk to whom he had a-done good did bear it in mind an' send the man a present, maybe a spare-rib o' pork when they did kill a pig, or a good fat goose at Kirsmas. An' quite right, too. Zo you zee sometimes Conjuror had a goodish many things to part wi', more than he could use his own self.

"Now one, John Spracketter by name, lost a little eight-runged ladder an' a very tidy hayknife away from a rick in his home-ground. He feeled most terr'ble mad about it, for he had to borrow an' fetch an' car' back morning an' night till he could replace it like, to say nothing o' the cost. Conjuror Bowbridge had a-found a thing or two afore for John, an' all the Spracketters thought all the world o' his skill. So John stepped up to the vower-cross-roads to zee what could be done. 'Now I'd bet a guinea,' said he to his missus afore he started, 'that Conjuror do meet I 'pon the road, afore I do get there, an' tell that I be a-comed about a eight-runged ladder an' a hayknife zo good as new, afore I do ope my mouth.' 'Get on wi' ee,' said his missus. 'You do ope your mouth zo wide that all the world do hear what you've a-lost a'most zo quick as you do know yourself.' Zo John he went on an' said no more.

"But when John Spracketter comed up to vower-cross-roads there were no Conjuror nor sign o' any soul alive. The door were ope, but when he rapped there wur nobody comed but the raven. He walked down to the pond, but Conjuror werden there. Then John, he got a-poking his nose one place an' t'other, a-sort of a-looking around the garden like, no harm at all, but to zee what he could zee. Conjuror had a-got some bundles o' very nice hazel pea-sticking in the corner, an' John he sort o' took up a bundle the better to look, an' dalled if he didn't eye his ladder an' hayknife in behind out o' the way like. An' he turned his head like, an' there were Conjuror a-stood a'most at his elbow. But the old Conjuror Bowbridge he only smiled. 'You had to come, John, though your missus would ha' had 'ee bide away. Zo I had your little ladder an' your hayknife a-brought on here to save time. But I can't do that for everybody, mind, zo you mus' keep a still tongue. An' whatever you do do, don't 'ee breathe a word to your missus.' There, John Spracketter, he stood amazed. He swore he'd never tell a soul for love nor money.

"Zo John's things were a-put back zame as usual. But a good warm fire, a few friends an' a drop o' cider be the ruination o' silence. John didn't mean to, but he let out. He could trust 'em all, he said, an' they declared quite solemn like they'd be zo secret as the tomb. An' yet, for all that, it did get about. The folk around did boast that really and truly there were no conjuror 'pon earth to come up to our Conjuror Bowbridge. But all to a sudden one summer day about noon, the constables went up wi' a warrant to search his house. They'd a-got an inkling o' zummat or 'nother, no doubt; but they found all manner an' sorts o' things that did belong to most everybody in parish. They took off the wold Conjuror there right to the lock-up. He never comed back. They pretended to show that he an' all the thieves about were rogues-agreed, an' zo the poor man got transported for the rest of his life.

"No, nobody ever lived up to Black Pond since then. The jack-feesh were a-found in the water dead, with his belly

a-turned up, afore very long; an' what went wi' the raven I never didn't hear tell. But Conjuror had a-saved enough money to set his son up in a farm. An' the poor about all said 'twere a terr'ble girt pity to lost the man. For the pigs an' the folk too that he had a-cured were something wonderful."

Joe Priddy shook his head. He had eaten his bread and cheese and told his tale. He shut up his clasp-knife with a snap and put it in his breeches pocket. Then he climbed up the bank and laid another plasher.

WALTER RAYMOND.

CURIOS PUMPKINS.

ANY different kinds of pumpkins are cultivated, and these, together with melons, gourds and butter-apples are the most curious representatives of the cucumber family. Some of these vegetables reach extraordinary dimensions. For example, there was exhibited several years ago an enormous specimen which was grown in the plains of Colorado. It measured not less than 5ft. in length and weighed 386lb. Other members of the same family grow into strange and picturesque shapes, well illustrated by the photographs which we reproduce. Some resemble



J. Boyer.

TURBAN PUMPKINS.

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turbans or serpents, some are like the domes of mosques and some even like the head-dresses at a carnival.

In France the seeds of the pumpkin are sown in April in a hotbed under glass; then they are thinned out and finally



J. Boyer. REMOVING STRAW MATS FROM TOURAIN PUMPKINS.

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transplanted to a bed in the open air during the month of May. This operation necessitates several preliminaries. A few days before the final transplanting it is necessary to dig holes from 4ft. to 6ft. away from each other, according to the kind of seed planted. These holes are then filled with manure, to which a little potash has been added, and the whole is covered up with good earth. When this is done a gourd seedling is planted in the middle of each hole, and care taken to cover it up with earth as far as the first leaves. The plant must be watered frequently in order to facilitate growth, and if the heat of the sun is too strong it may be covered with a little straw. In cold frosty weather it is usual in France to place a hand-glass over each seedling. In hot weather the plants are watered more frequently. When the gourd stems are about 3ft. in length they are layered; that is to say, pegged down so that they may take root. This method of procedure hastens the growth. As soon as a fruit forms, the extremity of the branch bearing it is cut off just above the next knot, and naturally it is taken off altogether if it seems misshapen. The market gardeners on the outskirts of Paris have learnt how to raise splendid gourds, and never allow more than one fruit to grow on one stalk. They cultivate all the edible varieties and even grow bitter apples, which are rather ornamental than otherwise when grown in gardens.

The different kinds of pumpkins grow in the shape of a more or less flattened sphere. The best known varieties are Mammoth Pumpkins, which are of such an enormous size and such a well-rounded appearance as to distinguish them from all others, and the gourds called the Gardener's Favourite or the large yellow Dutch are cultivated exclusively in the surroundings of Paris. The flesh of this kind, from 1in. to 3in. thick, is found slightly sweet and of a beautiful orange yellow. Other kinds are the tea gourds of Etampes, and the grey gourds of Boulogne that are frequently seen in the kitchen gardens in the middle of France and which differ from the other kinds mentioned in the greenish grey tinge of the skin. The Turban Pumpkins are remarkable on account of their shape. People say that the Turks have let fall the covering of their heads on the field which we show. Among pumpkins with leaves bearing stiff and prickly hairs ovoid or elliptical fruits are found of variable size and with or without longitudinal sides. One of the best known is the pumpkin of Touraine, with a smooth skin of a pretty green colour; there is a large pumpkin whose diameter lengthways often exceeds 19in., which is chiefly noteworthy for the extraordinary number of excrescences covering the surface. Square melons, also called Spanish artichokes, although they probably came originally from Mexico, are not the least curious specimens of the members of the cucumber family. Their colour varies from yellow to green. Certain kinds are striped with white and green, the flesh is pale in colour, rather stringy but very good all the same. They are seen on fruiterers stalls or in restaurant windows. When the skin is soft, they are packed up in baskets ready to be sent away. Italian gourds are



J. Beyer.

WOMEN COLLECTING SEEDS.

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long in shape and of a yellowish green colour. On seeing them one would be more inclined to think they were clubs belonging to wrestlers at a fair rather than fruit. Portuguese gourds, too, with their reddish sides, do they not seem like the top of certain oriental mosques that a hurricane has hurled on the ground? These last two kinds of gourds demand more heat than the others; they are cultivated chiefly in the South of Europe and in the Antilles. Their surface is covered with a kind of powdery down, and the flesh, firm and not stringy, varying in colour from pale yellow to blood red, possesses a more or less perfumed taste. Even French gourds are seldom eaten in their natural condition. They are made into soup, with water or with milk, and thus prepared they form a very healthy food. Peasants in the south make tarts and sweetmeats of them for their children; they also fry them as they would potatoes. In olden times they used to take the seeds out of a gourd and then dry it and serve it with different sauces. Roman slaves were thus fed. This practice has been kept up for a long while in Italy, and is still carried out in the neighbourhood of Genoa. In conclusion, let it be noted that Parisian gardeners, in order to preserve the purity of strain of their gourds, collect the seeds themselves each year. In proof of this, one of our pictures shows the women breaking open the very hard skins of the gourds with a hammer to take out the seeds, while other workers cut the fruits up into four parts and tear away the interior pulp. In Anjou an edible oil is extracted from the pulp, but this grows rancid rather quickly. In short, pumpkins are extremely curious plants as well as very useful ones.

IN THE GARDEN.

THE POLYANTHUS: ITS HISTORY AND CULTURE.

THE remarkable displays of Auriculas made recently by Mr. James Douglas of Edenside, Great Bookham, recall the work that has been accomplished by this distinguished raiser during the past thirty years or even more. A group of Auriculas shown towards the end of May before the Royal Horticultural Society was one of the most interesting

we have seen, and the sweet scent of the flowers mingled with that of the Rose and Lilac. It will be of interest, therefore, to readers of these notes to read Mr. Douglas's notes on the Polyanthus, which is fast going out of flower. They concern more the "exhibition" or "florist" varieties than those we are accustomed to see in the ordinary gardens. The exhibition Polyanthus, as it is called, as Mr. Douglas remarks, has been grown for nearly a century by the Lancashire florists for exhibition; they are now called laced Polyanthus to distinguish them from those termed the "fancy" Polyanthus. The former succeeds well in the North of England, and when there was formerly an exhibition at Newcastle-on-Tyne, about thirty years ago, very fine specimens were shown, and the varieties had been in cultivation many years previously. Buck's George the Fourth had doubtless been raised from seed during the reign of that king; this variety was always exhibited. Cheshire Favourite was a delightful contrast, having a black ground lined with rich yellow; the other variety had a red ground. Lancer was a charming variety with a more decided red ground than George the Fourth. Pearson's Alexander was always scarce, but it was occasionally exhibited.



J. Beyer.

SERPENT-LIKE GHERKINS.

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OLD WAYS OF GROWING POLYANTHUSES.

The treatment of these choice Polyanthus as practised near Newcastle-on-Tyne at that time was to grow one set of plants in the open garden all the year round, and they were repotted in August to flower under glass the following season. Those grown and flowered in this way were planted out when the flowering period was over, and they were grown outdoors until the time came to repot them for exhibition. Of course, if they are not required for exhibition they can always be grown in the open; but even more than the fancy Polyanthus they are liable to red spider, so much so that in dry districts in the South, especially if the soil is light, their cultivation is hopeless. As is well known, the common Primrose enjoys shade, and the Polyanthus has a similar predilection. Those who contemplate growing these beautiful garden flowers should obtain named sorts and plant them in a well-selected position. As soon as they bloom in April cross-fertilise the flowers to obtain seed, which pens at the present time and may be sown at once. Sow it in pans or seed-boxes. Mr. Douglas has found that it germinates best in a frame in which Cucumbers had been grown, and where the bed felt warm to the hand. If the pans are plunged in this material, kept shaded from the sun and the soil maintained in a moderately moist condition, the seed will germinate in a fortnight. When the young plants have made some growth prick them out in boxes, allowing a space of 2in. or 3in. between the seedlings. They will quickly develop into good-sized plants, and then can be put out in the position they are to beautify. Polyanthus certainly prefer heavy to light soil, which should be enriched with well-decayed manure. There is no question as to the hardiness of the plants; they do not suffer much from frosts, except the spring ones, when the flowers are opening. The Lancashire hand-loom silk-weavers, before the work was done by machinery, used not only to grow this favourite flower, but they improved it by careful cross-fertilisation and selection. These patient workers grew both the Polyanthus and the edged Auricula in their gardens, and they had established a high standard of excellence. The varieties called fancy Polyanthus in no way resemble the old-fashioned laced sorts. The best way to procure a collection is to raise them from seed. Seedlings grow into strong flowering plants in the course of a season, and if the seed is saved from selected varieties the strain improves from year to year.

RANDOM NOTES.

A Beautiful Flowering Tree.—One of the most beautiful of flowering trees is *Pyrus Malus floribunda*. We have seen several groups of it lately, and always with pleasure. It not only lasts long in bloom, but every shoot is wreathed in flowers which bend the growths with their weight. The buds are a rich crimson, but the open flowers are a soft pink. It is not a tall tree, rarely growing more than 10ft. or 15ft. high, and has several varieties, the most striking in colour being *atrosanguinea*. It is becoming more popular in gardens, and is a tree for the small plot, whether in town or country.

Mowing Grass in which Bulbs are Planted.—Unfortunately, the Daffodils in the grass have flown, and only withering leaves remain to remind one of their sweet presence in the late days of April and when May brought to her lap the flowers of the season. We are frequently asked the question, "When can I mow the grass in which Daffodils have bloomed?" The answer is, "Not until the foliage has died down." The reason for this is obvious. Disturbance of the leaf injures the root, and the bulb must live its life in its own way. When the leaves are dead, mowing may begin without harming the Daffodils.

The Art of Watering.—In the recently published gardening work, "The Unheated Greenhouse," occurs a practical note upon watering greenhouse plants. It is as follows: "Watering is one of the most critical operations of greenhouse work, requiring both knowledge and judgment. The plan of going round with a watering-pot and giving a driblet to every plant,

whether it wants it or not, is most injurious. Many a time it happens, when leaves are noticed to be flagging, that more water is given, when in reality the soil is saturated and the plant is already suffering from over-oses which it has not the power to assimilate. In putting sufficient space should be allowed below the rim of the pot to hold water. In hot, dry weather this space may have to be filled up two, or even three, times, in order that the soil may be thoroughly moistened, especially when the potting has been as firm as it should be, after which it will probably need no more for a day or two. Arums, being water-plants, are all the better for standing in a pan of water during growth, and a drop hanging from the point of the leaf is a sign of perfect health. Heaths, though they must never be allowed to become dust-dry, will not bear sodden, water-logged soil, which will decay the fine root fibres, and it is a matter of experience to keep the happy mean. Succulent plants, on the other hand, must be kept dry rather than moist, and in winter, as a general rule, require no water at all, unless they show signs of distress by becoming shrivelled. Almost all plants, however, during their growing season will take ample supplies, because it must be remembered that all food reaches them in liquid form. When active growth begins to lessen and life shows

signs of ebbing, it is better gradually to withhold water. Bulbs, especially those which lose their leaves, require a season of complete rest, and usually have to be kept dry."

The Geranium.—One of the most cheerful of summer flowers is the Geranium, and we are pleased to notice it brought prominently forward in a contemporary. The writer there mentions that for colour massing in shades of crimson and scarlet no flower is more effective, especially in a dry summer. Some of the best varieties are West Brighton Gem, J. Gibbons, orange-scarlet; H. Jacoby, crimson; Paul Crampel, a comparatively new variety of dwarf robust growth, brilliant scarlet in colour; King Edward VII., a sport from H. Jacoby, dark crimson, and one of the most effective for massing. In the pink and rose colour section the following are excellent: Master Christine, Lady Sheffield, Mme. Crouse and Souvenir de Chas. Turner, the two latter being of the Ivy-leaved class. In white the two following are among the best: Queen of the Whites and White Brighton Gem. Among the silver variegated-leaved variety none is so excellent as Bright Star. This is not grown so much as it deserves to be. The bronze and tricolor varieties are not so effective for massing.

Miniature Daffodils for the Rock Garden.—When looking through a remarkable collection of Daffodils the other day, we were much attracted by what are called the miniature Daffodils, and the following are recommended to be planted on

rockwork, the only position in which the flowers can be seen in their characteristic beauty. They are recommended to be left undisturbed for years, and if happy, will soon establish themselves and afford a lovely picture in early spring. All the *Corbularias* (except *Corbularia monophylla*) like moisture, and should therefore be planted at the foot of the rockery. *Cyclamineus* also likes moisture and partial shade. *Corbularia monophylla* flourishes in a warm, dry, sheltered situation, and should be given a hot, sunny nook, planted in almost pure sand; when coming into bloom give water freely. *Triandrus albus* (Angel's Tears) and *juncifolius* delight in partial shade and a light gritty soil, and should be given a well-drained position, such as a sloping bank. In the case of these slender dwarf-growing miniature Daffodils, the ground may be carpeted with close-growing surface-rooting plants, such as *Arenaria cespitosa*, *Thymus Serpyllum* vars., *T. lanuginosus*, *Hernaria glabra*, *Mossy saxifrages*, etc.; these plants provide a natural protection for these little bulbs, besides keeping their dainty blooms from being splashed and soiled in rainy weather. We prefer, however, seeing these little gems peeping out of grass." Fine dwarf grasses, when sown in September, after planting the bulbs, are recommended. A fine green carpet will result in spring and form a suitable background to the Daffodils.



Mrs. Delves Broughton. A GARDEN OF SUB-TROPICAL PLANTS. Copyright.



ENCOMPASSED by wild wastes of cold lands, Bolton can never have been a town lovely and desirable. In the days of its wealth, its waters foul with factory refuse and dye-stuffs, its air heavy with the smoke belched from the tall chimneys which are its pride, Bolton upon a wet working day is a sight at which a Gradgrind might shudder. It is an ancient market town of weavers, to which the policy of our old kings brought companies of the

Flemish strangers that they might teach their art to Lancashire. But little of antiquity meets the eye. Bolton, like Lant Street, wherein were the lodgings of Mr. Bob Sawyer, soon drives the curious gazer to moody introspection. Even the old parish church, falling into decay, has been rebuilt, and the traveller will look in vain for a picturesque or beautiful house. Arthur Young, indeed, visited it, and doubtless blessed its industry with his approval; but Bolton would appeal to no tourist less severe than



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THE PORCH

"COUNTRY LIFE."

he who viewed the streets of old Rouen with horror as he contrasted them with those of a Northern English manufacturing centre. The manners of its people shocked even Lancashire, which is no fastidious county, "a rough Bolton chap" being reckoned something less refined than a citizen of Wigan or Oldham. This is not to say that Bolton to-day wants for a town hall, for a library and for educational institutes, although it is,

in the township of Tonge, a mile from the town, and the hall, as its name tells you, stood in the woodland, among oaks and beeches, of which few descendants remain. But the roots can be seen of those tall timber trees of such mighty trunk that no cross-cut saw in Bolton would fell them, the woodmen beginning their work by hewing slabs out of their sides. On high and rocky ground above the Eagley



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THE SOUTH GABLE

"COUNTRY LIFE."

perhaps, a better proof of its growing civilisation that it should maintain and be proud of the Hall i' th' Wood.

The Hall i' th' Wood has all that Bolton lacks—beauty with the flavour of peaceful remoteness and old tradition of calm. From its stone-flagged terrace you look down upon the reek of the chimneys; but turn your face to its walls, enter at the porch, and Bolton with its millions of shuttles shrinks far off and becomes a lesser thing than the Hall i' th' Wood. We are here

brook, here swelled by many springs, is the old hall. Our view of the Hall i' th' Wood, as seen from the road, shows a typical black and white Lancashire house. Seen from the other side we have, as it were, a second house of stone. Such ornament as may be seen is ruder than the chippings on a Polynesian's club. What is here is sheer beauty of colour, and a line that follows no rule but the convenience of a rustic builder. Note how the side windows are cut high or low, nothing considered but the lighting



THE HALL FROM THE SOUTH-WEST.

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COUNTRY LIFE.

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A BLACK AND WHITE LANCASHIRE HOUSE.

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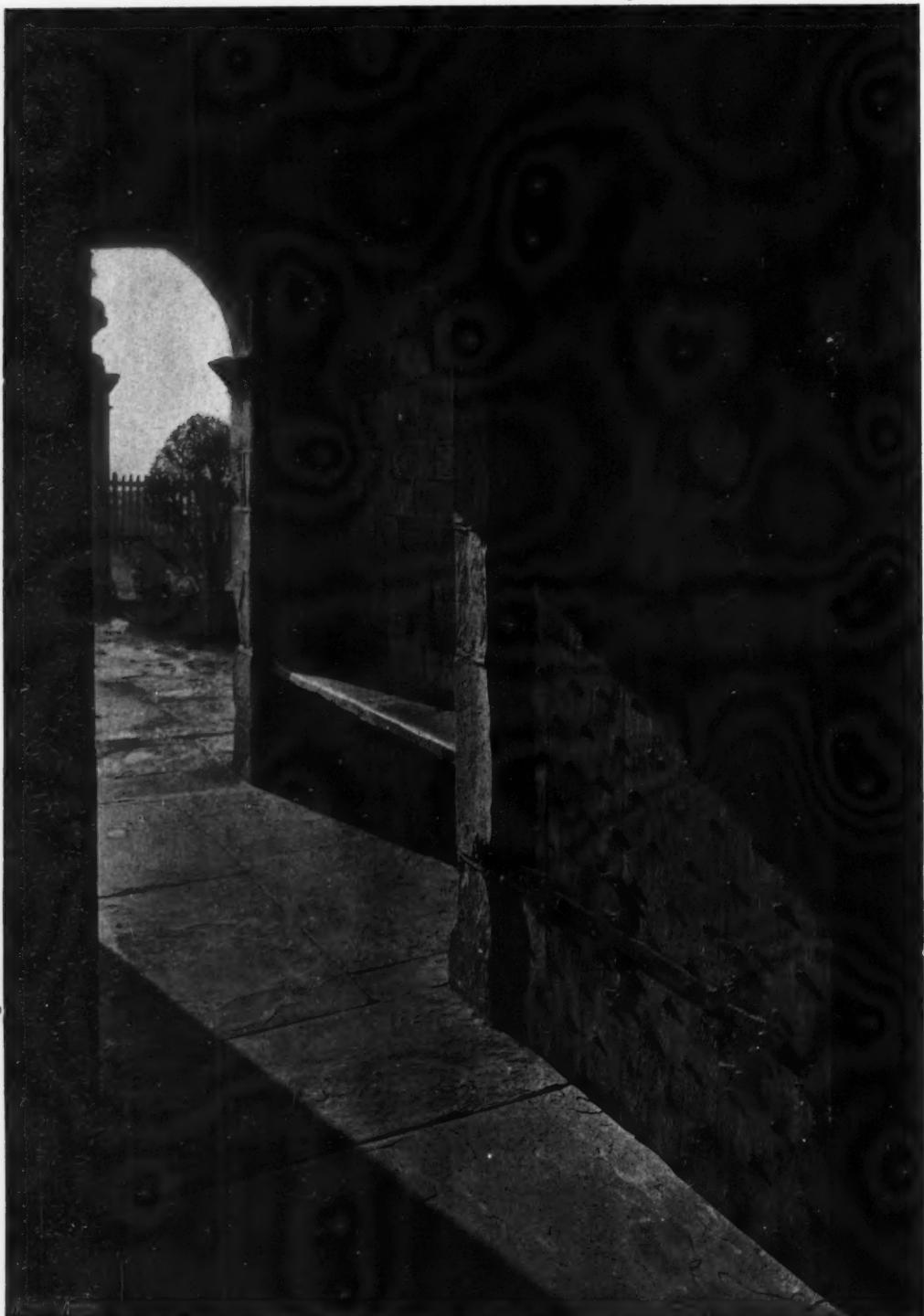
'COUNTRY LIFE.'

of the room within. The very pattern which the black timbers make against white plaster is less designed ornament than the natural lines which the frame of such a house must follow. A man bred in the Italian tradition would find this house little removed above the burrow of a cave-dweller. Yet something in the sight of it takes an English eye: it draws one with the geniality of a fire on a hearth, for this is no house built by the pattern book, but the old home set up to the good liking of one of our English forefathers. The chief entry is at the terrace end, through a doorway built when they were trying King Charles for his life at Whitehall. Massive in its oaken timber, strapped

to the ceiling, where the woodwork ends in a narrow but rich frieze. At the inner end is a plain stone fireplace, the mantel above it enriched with the usual pilasters and caryatides of a seventeenth century best chamber. A few pieces of furniture gathered together from the neighbourhood complete the picture: the tall cupboard of a fashion found to perfection in Lancashire and Yorkshire—this as old as the room—the box settle drawn to the fire and the glazed cabinet full of pewter. Another room with a bay and a side window is the parlour. Here we have a ceiling daubed with unmoulded plaster between the rough-hewn beams. Note the little fireplace of stone sunk in the wall with no mantel above it, the rudeness of the wall-framing, whose builders never meant it to show its coarse lines in this wise without wainscot to cover them. Here again we have certain chosen pieces of furniture, disposed not as in a museum, but as though their old owners were at hand—a 200 year old armchair with needlework back and seat, a tapestry hanging, another tall oaken cupboard, a long dresser and a joined stool, all of seventeenth century type. Hooked up on the walls are two little crossbows of steel. Such bows, little changed, have been used in these parts in our own days, carrying a bullet to the rook's perch. Here also hang two or three old portraits in ruffs and falling bands. Our view of the staircase foot shows the massive work of these joiners, who from the woods at hand had oak timber in plenty. The carved beast filling an angle is rude decoration of a type which comes down the ages little changed from the grotesques of the Norsemen.

Very little is known of the early history of this house, which does not appear to have been the chief house of a manor. Local historians say that the Norris family dwelt here for several generations, but when some years ago the Eagley brook rose in flood-water and made a ruin of the northward wall a stone fireplace was uncovered with $L^B B$ cut upon it with a date of 1591. This will allow us to identify Hall i' th' Wood with the messuage in Tonge township concerning which we have many family suits brought in the court of the Duchy of Lancaster by the Brownlowes. The children of Lawrence Brownlowe of Tonge were disputing with their father's executor in the second year of Elizabeth, so this fireplace must have been set up by Lawrence Brownlowe the younger, whose great-grandfather Roger, according to that careful antiquary, Mr. F. W. Irvine, held lands in Tonge and perhaps in Hull itself as early as 1499.

From the Brownlowes the hall came, by a daughter's marriage, it may be, to Alexander Norris, probably a cadet of the Norrises of Speke. This Alexander was the builder of a great part of the stone wing, and under the sundial of the entry we have a slab with $A^N A$ and the date of 1648 for Alexander and his wife. Master Norris might count himself happy in being safe under his own roof-tree in that year of 1648, for two years before he had been bound to confess to the Parliament's commission that he had been in arms for the King. The taking of the Covenant and the Negative Oath, a fine of £15, and doubtless some useful friendship among the conquering faction, allowed him to come lightly out of his troubles, to hang up his sword at Hall i' th' Wood and busy himself with his



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LOOKING OUT THROUGH THE ENTRANCE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

with long flowery-ended hinges and studded with great nail-heads, this door is built to bid the stranger pause. But if he be a true man, he may wait for his welcome in the deep shelter of the porch, which has on either side a slab seat of stone. Once within doors we are in an old Lancashire home restored to all the semblance of its early days. In this stone-built wing we have the chief rooms, whereof the withdrawing-room is seen in two of our pictures, a stately room lit by broad windows with mullions and transoms, a side window and a deep bay of eighteen lights. The ceiling is decorated with plaster mouldings in compartments, after the fashion of the second half of the seventeenth century, and the walls are oak-panelled

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COUNTRY LIFE.

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A CORNER OF THE WITHDRAWING-ROOM

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masons. His daughter Alice carried the hall to her husband John Starkie, son of Nicholas Starkie of Huntroyd, the Puritan squire blown up in the gunpowder explosion at Hoghton Tower. The Starkies' shield of arms, whose six storks play on their name, is in the plaster-work of the hall, which descended with them until our own time. John Starkie lived here, and Alice his widow after him. But the family had deserted their house for many generations, and when in late years it was bought by Mr. W. H. Lever it was an old tenement, crazy and dropping to pieces for neglect. Its restoration is a work upon which the skilled architect who had it in his hands may be reasonably proud; and we may hope that Bolton keeps a lively gratitude towards Mr. Lever, who has generously conveyed to its corporation this beautiful monument of the past.

Even in its present state, clean and amended, the Hall i' th' Wood has chambers that seem to invite the ghost at dusk. But it must have been an eerie place when, with half its windows bricked up to save the window taxes, the wind came through the leaking roof and about the hiding-holes, the narrow passages and mysterious little rooms, which made a maze of its

invention was in the air; the country was groaning for the great change. James Watt was turning the steam toy to a world force, and the weaving-room at the hall had the drop-box invented by John Kay, mobbed out of the country for his invention, and the spinning-jenny of Hargreaves, whose house and machines had been destroyed by a brutal crowd. But Arkwright, who, as the "subterraneous barber," Samuel Crompton had often seen in his shop in the Churchgate, was riding his inventions towards knighthood and fortune, and Crompton, a dreamy lad with a neat hand and a head full of mathematics, was pushed daily towards discoveries by a scolding mother, who would have him finish each day an allotted task, no matter how the ends of rotten yarn might snap in the weaving. At twenty-one years old the young weaver began to plan the machine known as the Mule—"Hall i' th' Wood Wheels" the Bolton neighbours called it—and in five years, working without confidant or helper, he brought it to perfection. Mule it was, for it joined the principles of Arkwright and Hargreaves, Arkwright's rollers and Hargreaves's jenny-wheel, with Crompton's spindle-carriage added to them. It all but perished at its birth, this first model



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THE WINDOWS IN THE PARLOUR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

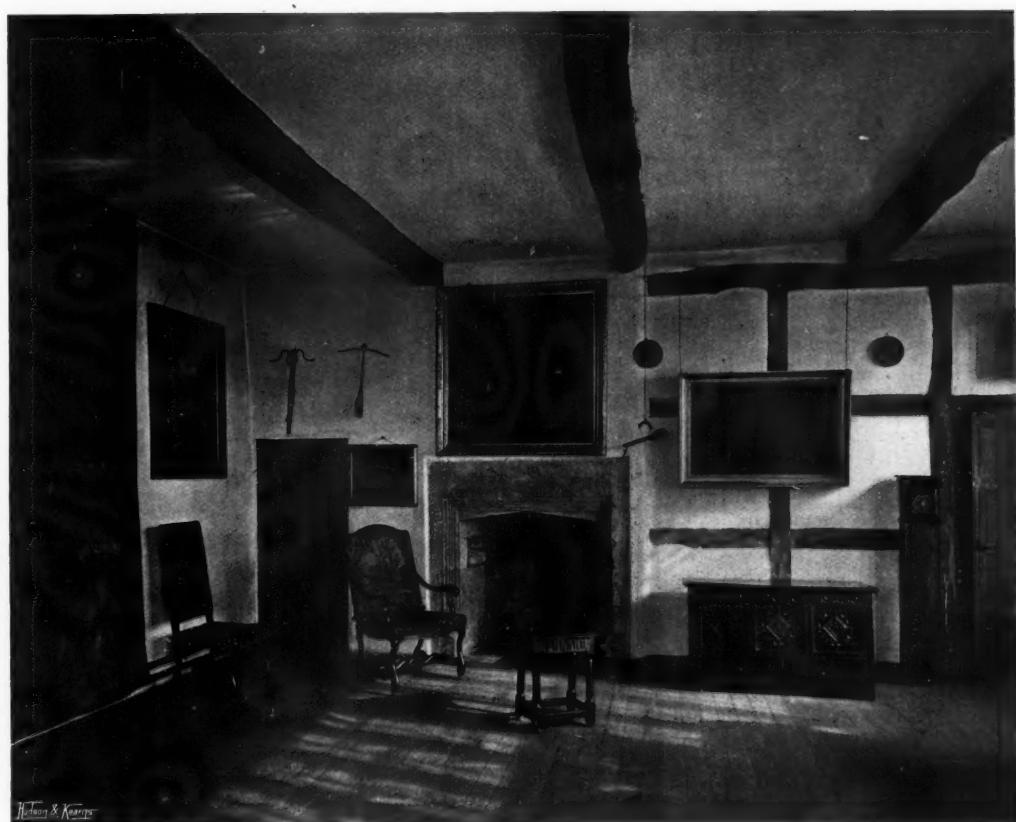
garret storey. Hall i' th' Wood is indeed haunted, but with the memory of a great wrong done to an honest man who dwelt here. Brownlowes, Norrises and Starkies, squires and gentlemen, are now but names for the genealogists, but to the shame of Bolton the story of Samuel Crompton is extant and written down in full.

He was a Bolton man, this Crompton, sprung from one of the score of Crompton households within the limits of the parish whose first register entry is a Crompton marriage. His father was a small farmer of Tonge Township, whose little holding had been first mortgaged and then sold outright to the Starkies, the lords of Hall i' th' Wood. In 1758, when he was five years old, his parents made their home in part of the ruinous old hall from which the Starkies had retired, and there the father died soon after. The widow lived on at the hall, selling her butter and honey, brewing her elderberry wine and spinning her yarn like a good Bolton housewife. From childhood Samuel Crompton wrought at the monotonous drudgery of the loom, his few books and a violin of his own making serving for all recreation. But

of the Mule, for in 1779 the fury of the Blackburn weavers was hot against all machinery, destroying the improved jennies for miles round. The dark lofts and trapped garrets of Hall i' th' Wood then served Crompton well. For many weeks the "wheels," taken asunder, were hidden here and there until the storm went by, but at the end of that year the Mule was at work, spinning fine yarn and earning for Samuel Crompton the silver watch that served him for the rest of his life. At the end of those strenuous years he married a ruined merchant's daughter, whom he found spinning for a living on a Hargreaves jenny, and in a room of the old hall the young couple waited for fortune, spinning the yarn which was at last to weave in England muslins as fine as those brought home by the Indiamen. But his secret could no longer be kept. The machine-burning days had passed; but spying manufacturers hung about Hall i' th' Wood, peered through the windows and keyholes, scaled his wall with ladders and lurked in his cock-lofts. Arkwright himself, a brazen fellow if ever there was one, is by report one of those who came with covetous eyes. The old

patent laws were in force; they would remain for Dickens to flog with his "Poor Man's Tale of a Patent" 100 years later. Poor Crompton had no guineas to spare for the maw of the Deputy Chaffwax and his fellows, and with rich spinners in every township about him, Crompton could find no honest man who would help him to realise the riches that lay so close at hand. In despair he gave up his treasure. Some fifty manufacturers put their names upon a sheet of paper, with a guinea against each, five - and - twenty more came in at half a guinea, another added 7s. 6d., another 5s. 6d. Then Samuel Crompton brought out his wheels, and the vultures flew off with Samuel Crompton's secret. Many a Northern house dates its rise to wealth from the day when its head put his name to that list. The death duties still benefit by the huge fortunes raised on those guineas and half guineas, but Crompton found himself with the bare means in his hands for making a second Mule. Commercial infamy must find bottom somewhere, and surely with those thrifty souls who, having cozened away the wealth-spinning idea, drove the inventor off with abuse when he came to collect the paltry shillings for which they had pledged their respectable names.

Crompton made other inventions. Back at the loom again, more labour-saving ideas came to him, to be stolen away as was



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THE PARLOUR.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

his first masterpiece. So well did the Mule work, that there were those who believed that it was the flood of wealth brought to the country by the Hall i' th' Wood wheels that enabled us to break the power of Bonaparte and keep England a nation.



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ANOTHER CORNER OF WITHDRAWING-ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

When Samuel Crompton came to look for figures upon which to base a claim for national reward he found 660,000 people looked to his Mule for their living. But poor Crompton's ill-luck dogged him through life. "You will be glad to hear," said the Chancellor of the Exchequer in the inventor's hearing, "that we mean to propose twenty thousand pounds for Crompton." Five minutes afterwards the weaver saw a rush of people towards the lobby of the House. A man in a brown coat and brass basket buttons had shot down the Chancellor, who was dying with a memorandum of Crompton's affairs clutched between his fingers. A few months later a dole of five thousand pounds was made to Mr. Crompton, and an honourable member who had voted for the grant wrote off at once to the inventor asking for a loan of one of those thousands. What little remained after fees and expenses had been met was lost in business, and but for the charity of a few old friends, the man who made Bolton rich might have come at the last to Bolton poor-house.

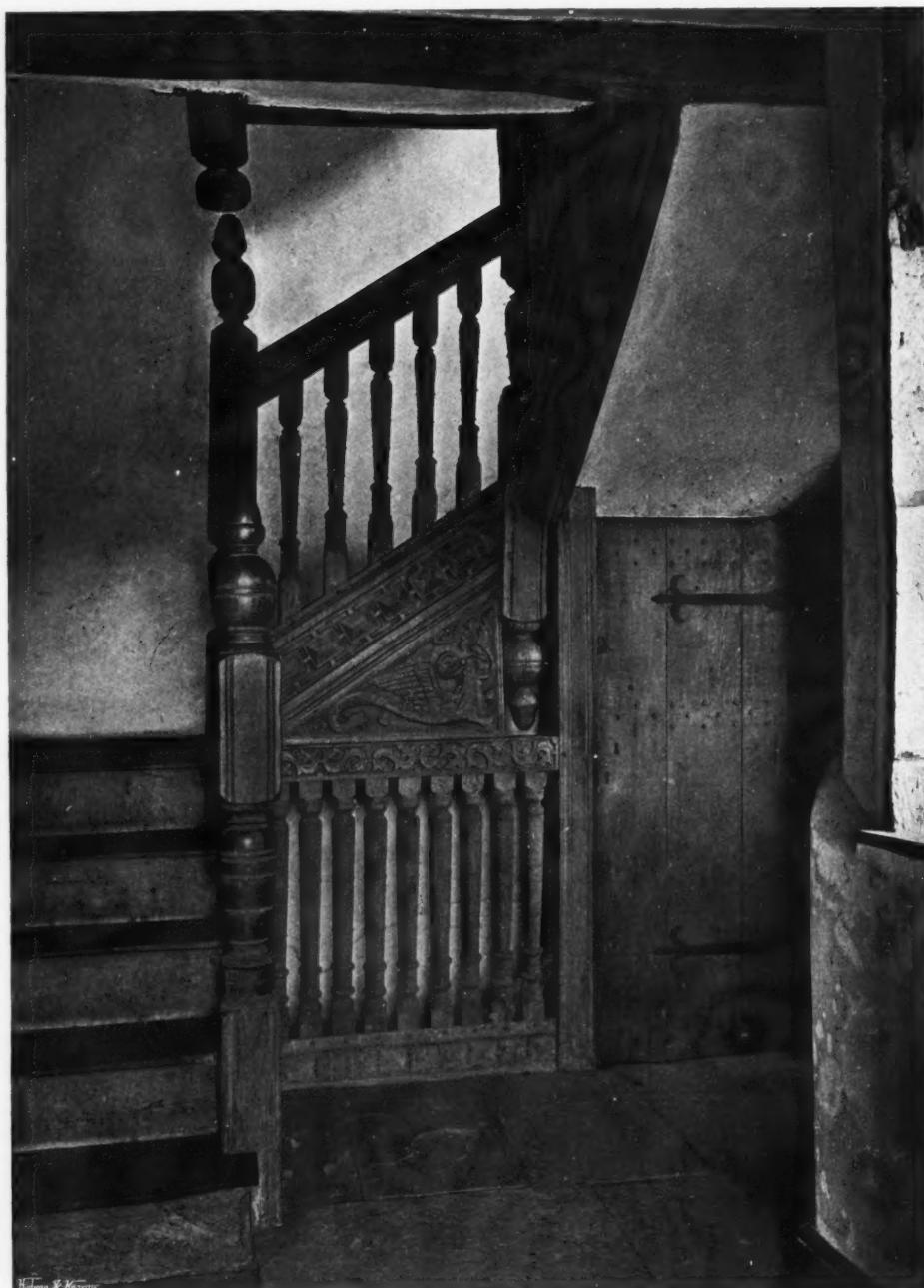
Oswald Barron.

DUTCH & FLEMISH FURNITURE.

In a book bearing the above title (Hodder and Stoughton) Mrs. Singleton seeks not merely to describe the furnishings of the Low Countries from mediæval to recent times, but to find out who made them and where and why; under what artistic influence or lordly patronage they were produced and for what purpose and whose use. There is an abundance of closely-marshalled facts, elaborate inventories of household goods, long lists of architects and artists, of designers and craftsmen. And yet the book is not dull or difficult to read, for it is written with much clearness and intelligence, showing grasp of the subject and power to hand on the information to the reader.

Like all writers on the history and development of furniture, Mrs. Singleton is hard pressed to find an adequate number of early examples; for the mediæval folk had little of it, and few are the bits that have lived through the centuries. So scarce was it that kings and barons who moved much between their various castles and possessions carried it along with them, and thus, in those roadless days, it was not merely scanty, but light and portable. Chests held their valuables, and from the chest or *huche* gradually developed the more important kinds of furniture for storage, such as the credence and the buffet, the cupboard and the chest of drawers; and cabinet-makers continued to be called *huchiers* when chest-making became a mere subordinate section of their craft. Even in the sixteenth century, however, the coffer, as the fine Flemish example here illustrated shows, was a worthy object of the wood-carver's skill. Tables, in early times, were boards on trestles, and chairs were rare. On the other hand, what we now call fitments were comparatively frequent. Cupboards were built into the walls, and fixed benches ran along them and were also part of the masonry of the deep window recesses. The chief source of production was the monastery, where security and leisure prevailed; and the splendid furnishing of the House of God was the principal function of the decorative artist. Fine wood-carving was essentially for ecclesiastical purposes—for the screens, the rood-lofts and the choir stalls with their parloses and canopies—and this gave the tone to the early mediæval school, so that even for lay purposes, for the fitting of the baron's hall or the citizen's chamber, religious subjects prevailed. But, as wealth and peace progressed, as the castle became a mansion rather than a fortress, as the towns, winning their freedom and ensuring their peace, became peopled with rich citizens in ample dwellings, lay workshops, meeting lay requirements, gave a secular character to the ornamentation.

When this did happen it reacted on the ecclesiastical work, so that both stone-sculptor and wood-carver gave free scope to their more worldly leanings as to the choice of their subjects and the play of their fancy in their treatment of the fifteenth century church. It was at the opening of this century that Flanders was *facile princeps* among the states of Europe in the domain of the higher craftsmanship. Arras gave its name to the tapestries which accompanied the great man's peregrinations as his wall and bed hangings, but Tournay, Bruges and Brussels were her compatriots. The exhibition of gold and silver and jewelled plate on the giant dressers of the Burgundian dukes caused surprise and ecstasy to foreign visitors of high degree, whether they were German or Italian, French or English. But in nothing did fifteenth century Flanders excel more than in its wood-carving; and when Philip the Bold, even before the century opened, determined that he



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FOOT OF STAIRCASE. HALL I' TH' WOOD. "COUNTRY LIFE."

and his should have a mausoleum at Dijon equal to that of his cousin of France at St. Denis,

his art and craftsmen were all drawn from the Low Countries; Nicholas Sluter was in charge; and under his directions the Chartreuse became a veritable Flemish museum of carving . . . the oak riel tables with their numerous *figurines* were the work of a Flemish carver named Baerze de Termende. In fact, the only Frenchman who had any part in the work was Berthelot Heliot, an ivory-carver . . . The fame of the Flemish wood-carvers spread far beyond the confines of their own provinces, and their services were eagerly sought in England (as witness the Eastern Counties' church screens), France, Spain, Italy and even Germany. Although German wood-carvers were plentiful, John Floreins was employed on the choir stalls of the Cologne Cathedral. In 1465, Flemish *huchiers* were called upon to carve the stalls of Rouen . . . the *armoires* of the sacristy of Ferrara bear the signatures of Henry and William, two Flemish carvers.

But with the Renaissance Flanders tended to go back and Italy to come forward. The ducal line of Burgundy had ended in gloom and the devastation of war, and its heiress had carried its vast possessions to the House of Austria, whose princesses ruled at Brussels as regents. Margaret, in the early sixteenth century, sought to maintain the native Gothic taste against the invasion of Italian classicism, and the wonderful Louvain choir stalls remain to attest this survival up to the middle of the century. Yet the still more wonderful Bruges mantelpiece tells how the

native artist was impregnated with the new spirit, and had lost none of his old cunning of design and execution in materialising it. The Renaissance was a frankly material and selfish age, when man wished—and wished intensely—to produce or purchase beautiful and costly objects for his own immediate surroundings and gratification. His house, large, comfortable, sumptuous, was to be the receptacle of every recently-improved or wholly new contrivance for his convenience or his enjoyment. Furniture rapidly multiplied in quantity and variety in accordance with national and climatic requirements, but the decorative inspiration came from Italy.

The Italian's furniture was particularly *da pompa*, made for the adornment of long galleries. . . . His materials, like his taste, are more decorative than practical. . . . The favourite decorative motives are antique columns, pediments, garlands, pagan deities, classic heroes, caryatides, grotesques, cartouches, pilasters and arabesques. . . . Such was the taste that invaded the Low Countries, much of it brought home by the Flemish artists who visited Italy. . . .

Under Mary of Austria, who ruled at Brussels for her brother Charles V., this school flourished.

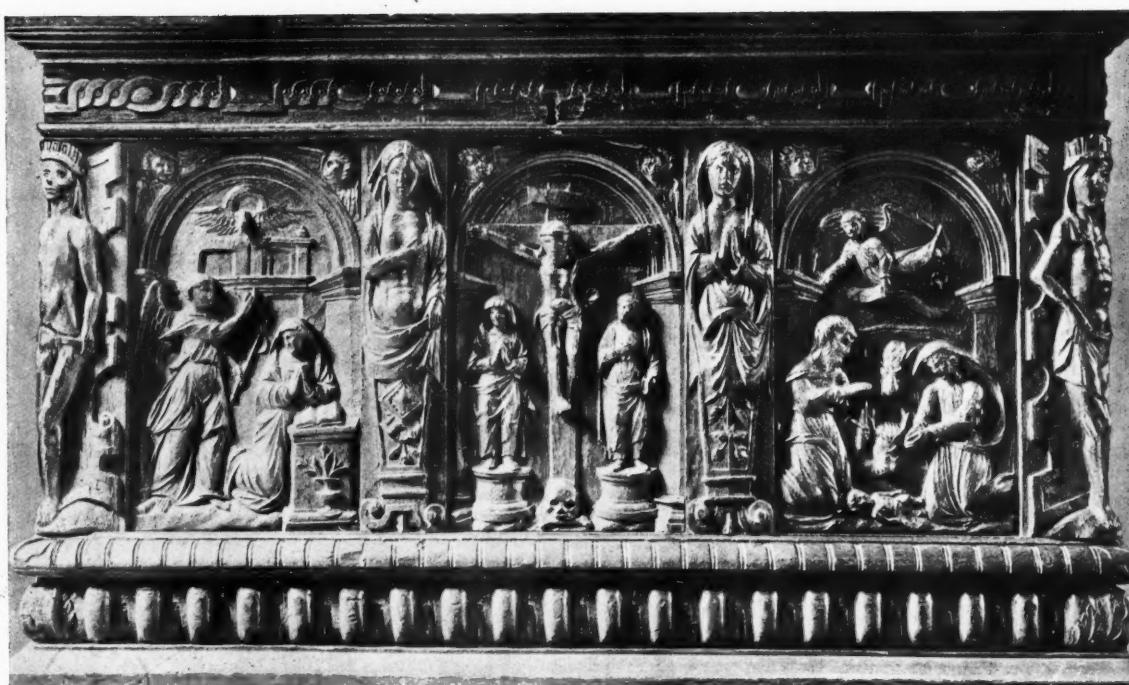
The nobles vied with royalty in luxury, and the beautiful tapestries, furniture, gold and silver work, enamels, etc., found ready sale. Such magnificent houses as that of the Counts of Egmont excited the anger of the populace; and those of many successful artists and rich merchants were hardly inferior.

The designer now comes into prominence. With the rise of the classic spirit, the Gothic licence, the leaving of the motives and details to the individual craftsman, had to go.

Before 1500 A.D. publications of purely decorative design are exceedingly scarce. From the opening of the sixteenth century, however, such publications rapidly multiply. . . . The first decorative designers who adopted the style of the Renaissance were Albert Claas, Lucas van Leyden and Cornelis Bos. Then followed de Vries, painter, architect, sculptor, designer and poet, whose collection of designs appeared in 1580, and forms a most valuable record for those who desire to study the style of the Renaissance in the Netherlands.

Several of these Mrs. Singleton reproduces. As a rule, they are elaborate rather than elegant; the ornament heavy and surcharged. They show a lack of unison between the exotic detail and the native form; but they reached England, and more than one of his house elevations appear in Thorpe's designs with very little alteration.

It is noticeable that not one of the designers now mentioned was a Fleming—all came from the Northern provinces, whose new-born vigour and development were being tried in the fire of bitter and prolonged war, during a struggle for existence against the might of Spain. They triumphed, and emerged a nation, wealthy, energetic, intelligent, and it is principally with Holland that the latter part of this book has to deal. She gives in detail several of the inventories which help us so fully to realise the arrangement and furnishing of the seventeenth century Dutch homes—such as that of the painter Van Miervelt of Delft, and of Rembrandt himself, whose goods had to come under the hammer in 1659 to satisfy his creditors. Though possessions had become more numerous and varied by the introduction of china and glass, the popularisation of pictures, the multiplication of the products of the loom and of the printing press, the importation of the



FLEMISH COFFER OR HUCHE: CLUNY MUSEUM, PARIS.

goods of the Far East, yet the furniture of the Dutch burgher tended to rather more severity of line and restraint of ornament than we have seen earlier in Flanders, and than still prevailed there under the influence of Rubens's florid style. The *kas*, or cupboard, was of immense importance, for the Dutch wife was rich in stuffs and linens, crockery and hardware, and her tidy nature needed adequate storage room. Fine examples of such in the sixteenth and seventeenth century are reproduced in Mrs. Singleton's book, the originals being in the Rijks Museum at Amsterdam. As many as ten or twelve such *hasten* are found in inventories of one house; and no wonder, for one wealthy dame in Dordrecht is described as having forty dozen table-cloths and napkins, and coffers full of uncut linen. Her personal wardrobe was equally liberally supplied with rich robes of sarsenet, and serge of fine colour; Japanese night robes of dead leaf colour; white satin robes lined with amaranth taffeta; black velvet robes with cloth of silver; while she also possessed cloth of gold valued at £16 a yard. Next to the *kas* ranks the bed. "Their beds are no other than land-cabines, high enough to need a ladder or stairs. Up once you are walled in with wainscot," is old Owen Feltham's description of such a piece as is here reproduced. This form, however, gave way in general practice to the upholstered bed with canopy, valance and hangings of stuff.

Before the eighteenth century opened (though purely Dutch furniture, redolent of the soil, still continued to be made and used by the lesser folk to a much larger extent than the reader of Mrs. Singleton's book might judge) French taste began to dominate in Holland. Of the many French furniture designers and cabinet-makers who were driven from home by the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, and introduced the *Style refugé* into neighbouring countries, Daniel Marot was, perhaps, the chief, and his style was "majestic, pompous and heavy." But though he and his designs loom large in these pages, he never was more than some two years in the Republic, and it is of his beds at Hampton Court and his decorations at Holme Lacy that we hear, while not one single example of his work is mentioned as being in Holland, and we are told that "the English student need not cross the channel to study Dutch interior decoration and furniture of the close of the seventeenth century." This is not exactly a scheme of original research, and leaves us entirely in the dark as to what influence Marot had in Holland and how much Holland's natural genius was doing independently of Marot. I am inclined to think that good *Style refugé* furniture can be found made and remaining in Holland which it would be well worth illustrating and describing. Indeed, I know of a bed there equal to the English ones she mentions, and superior to the Marot designs which she pictures. Moreover, two essentially Dutch types, the glazed walnut cabinet and the bird and flower marquetry furniture, are hardly mentioned and nowhere illustrated by her, though extraordinarily fine examples of these are frequently met with in Dutch private houses, where they have stood since the day they were made. There is no doubt that the authoress draws her examples from collections too well known and a field too narrow. The Cluny in Paris and the Rijks in Amsterdam are the beginning and end of her sources of illustration apart from books of designs. How far more interesting and original it

would have been had she, for the Renaissance period, reproduced, for instance, the exquisite stall work at Kampen, which she barely mentions; and, for later work, relied upon the collections of such eminent dealers as Tenuissen in The Hague, or, better still, upon the fine old stuff still retained in country houses such as Amerongen, Twinkle and Medachten, whose courteous owners never refuse anything in the

interests of art or literature. I make this criticism because there is so much valuable material, conscientious research and sound observation in Mrs. Singleton's book that I would wish to see such slight additional work and judgment bestowed on a second edition as would immediately stamp it as the unchallenged authority on this interesting branch of the decorative arts.

H. AVRAY TIPPING.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE NIGHTJAR.

JUST before the middle of May, at the fringe of a wood bordering a piece of wild common, I heard for the first time this season the familiar, vibrating churr of the nightjar. One seldom notices these migrants before the second week of this month, and with the arrival of the swifts and the presence of the goat-sucker one always seems to feel that the promise of summer is almost complete. The strange, whirring note of this bird travels far indeed through the still warm evening air of May and June; and the creature's trick of twisting its head from side to side as it produces the volume of sound assists in no small degree in diffusing that volume in different directions. The effect is often very singular.

A FALSE COGNOMEN.

It is curious that the name goat-sucker, still frequently given by country people to this bird, should be scattered so widely throughout Europe. False legends thus descend through long ages, and the poor goat-sucker, one of the most harmless birds in the world, as well as one of the most useful, will, one supposes, for hundreds of years yet to come still continue to labour under this slanderous designation. The wide gape of the nightjar, and the fact that the bird is occasionally to be seen taking its prey near the udder of a cow, form, actually, the only possible excuses for such a name. The food of the bird is absolutely and essentially insectivorous, and the fact that grazing cattle disturb the moths and other insects upon which the nightjar feeds naturally attracts these birds to their neighbourhood.

SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF THE NIGHTJAR.

The plumage of this bird is very beautiful, the combination of brown, warm buff and ashy grey, streaked, spotted and barred, being, in its way, fully as admirable as the scheme of colouring of the woodcock or the wry-neck. The white spots and patches on the first three quill feathers and the two outermost tail feathers are found only in the male. The beauty of the feathering is, however, much discounted by the huge, staring eyes and enormous mouth, the latter always reminding me of the repulsive gape of the puff-adder or some other wide-mouthed serpent. This unpleasant aspect is increased by the strong bristles, capable of diverging and contracting, with which either side of the mouth is furnished. These bristles, as well as the viscous saliva with which the mouth is furnished, are, of course, useful adjuncts in the capture and retention of moths and other insects. It is probable that not a little of the prejudice with which farm people and gamekeepers still cherish against these birds is due to the unpleasant aspect of the head of the harmless nightjar. The somewhat hawk-like flight of the bird furnishes also an additional prejudice in the mind of the more illiterate class of keeper. It may be repeated here that the nightjar is as harmless a creature as the swallow or the martin. Its weak bill should be sufficient instantly to convince the stoniest-hearted keeper that the bird is utterly



T. A. Metcalfe.

COCK WHEATEAR.

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incapable of devouring a fledgling pheasant or an egg, and that its diet is absolutely insectivorous.

NAMES AND DISTRIBUTION OF THE ENGLISH NIGHTJAR.

The nightjar, as I have said, feeds greedily on moths, of which its enormous mouth enables it to devour quite large species. Other insects, caterpillars, fern-chafers, beetles, and especially the dorbeetle, are included in the dietary of this bird. Among English rural names, in addition to those of nightjar and goat-sucker, are eve-jar, dor-hawk, night-crow, fern-owl, night-churr, night-hawk, jar-owl, churn-owl, puckeridge and wheel-bird. The Germans, like ourselves, have many names for the bird, among the most familiar being night-swallow, goat-sucker, day-sleeper, night-shadow, night-trotter, witch, parson and spectacle-nose. The nightjar makes but a short stay with us, and is usually away again for other countries before the beginning of October. It is found in Asia Minor, Palestine, Persia, Turkestan and Afghanistan, as well as in Arabia, North-West India and many parts of Africa. In the latter continent it penetrates as far south as Natal. It is singular that the suspicion concerning this bird should be so wide-spread. In Germany, as I have said, one of the old rustic names is "witch." And so far away as South and Central America the Indians regard the goat-suckers of their country as creatures of evil. The Zulus also look upon them as unclean birds, employed by witches for evil purposes; and it is a fact that these people dislike to hear their gentle and not unpleasant call in the evenings. It is strangely curious that the Zulus should, according to Drummond, translate the notes of this bird into "Come, come, come and milk for my children," and associate the sound with an invitation to the bird's fellows to hasten and take suck from their neighbours' cows. So widespread throughout the world is this unfortunate bird's reputation as a devourer of milk!

THE NIGHTJAR AS TABLE BIRD.

We in this country know nothing of the bird as an article of food. Yet it is quite indubitable that the nightjar is most excellent eating. The Maltese very well understand this fact, and during the spring migration of the bird from Africa and other countries to Europe, large numbers are shot and eaten by the inhabitants. The late Mr. W. H. Drummond, in his book, "The Large Game and Natural History of South-East Africa," says: "It was mere accident that taught me what a delicious bird it was. I had shot one when on my way home one evening, more out of curiosity than anything else, and it was taken in and sent up to dinner, and I then made the discovery, and never afterwards lost an opportunity of getting one. They are absolute pats of butter, sometimes even bursting in their fall to the ground, and are, in my opinion, equal if not superior to woodcock." This was the Natal goat-sucker (*Caprimulgus natalensis*). Fired by Drummond's example, I have more than once made the experiment on another South African species, the pectoral goat-sucker, and I can aver that it provided very excellent eating. I have little doubt, in fact, that all the nightjars are good table birds.



T. A. Metcalfe.

HEN WHEATEAR.

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THE RETURN OF THE SWIFT.

The entrances of these birds into Britain are so sudden that they seem to come upon one almost like a flash of light. In East Sussex this year I first noticed them on May 12th, though possibly they had been seen by other observers some days before that time. The exit of the swift is equally sudden. Some time towards the first week in August it has made up its mind to depart, and hey, presto! in a flash it has vanished from our skies. In another two or three weeks these same birds are arriving at the Cape of Good Hope—a long trek even for so vigorous and so perfect a flier. The swift is seldom seen with us until May has arrived, the favourite period for its arrival during an average season being the first half of that month. The Alpine swift is a much rarer visitant, and its occurrences in this country are looked upon as somewhat important events. Last year a pair of these large swifts were observed near Exmouth during the month of August, their somewhat curious notes having been remarked upon for some time before the birds were actually identified. In fact, they had been about the neighbourhood in July as well as August. This bird may be easily identified by its white throat and stomach. It is also more than an inch longer than the common swift. The general colouring is mouse brown.

THE WHEATEAR.

Wheatears, of which two excellent illustrations of a cock and hen bird are given, seem to me not so plentiful as usual this spring. I do not think that in the last fifteen years their numbers have perceptibly diminished much, but it is certain that they must be far less abundant in East Sussex than they were in the eighteenth century, when, about the time of wheat harvest, as many as 1,840 dozen were ensnared by South Down shepherds in the neighbourhood of Eastbourne during a single short season. At such a time, of course, the birds would be gathering in the South of England for their return migration. The notes are soft and pleasing, and not infrequently the bird, which, like most of its family, has a decidedly imitative bent, may be heard copying the song of the lark and the notes of other birds. In captivity, happily, these birds are not often seen in this country; but it is a fact that the song of a caged wheatear, especially in winter, is extremely sweet and varied. It is always interesting to compare the rural names of birds on the Continent with our own. The German names for the wheatear, as might be expected, have a strong family resemblance to ours. They are grey stone-smacker, stone-chat, white-tail, white-rump, little white-throat and greater white-tailed stone-chat.

H. A. B.

VOYAGES ON SOME SCOTCH RIVERS.

I TAKE it that if there is one thing that the real born professional explorer loves more than another it is a river. I know well that the need to learn what lies beyond the mountains is with him a great and urgent need. He cannot rest this side with that forbidding barrier daily before his eyes. But even as he presses on, eager to surmount it and solve the grand problem that it presents, if he should come upon a river that is new to him, I think that he will often turn aside to solve the yet more commanding problem of these restless, unknown waters. Whence do they come? And whither do they flow? How many men have been drawn on by these alluring questions to perish in the bold attempt to find the source of the world's great water-ways! On the other hand, what journey that man can make upon this planet has the same power to stir his soul and fire his heart as the long tortuous voyage down some noble stream, beginning on the heights of the mainland and ending only with the sea?

For me, I am no explorer. Never have I penetrated beyond the reach of the long arm of the travel agent, and only in dreams have I added new rivers and new islands to the map. But at least I have more than once stood on the bank of a stream as yet untraversed, here in the heart of Scotland, 500ft. or 600ft. above sea-level, and taken upon myself a vow as I pushed out into the tide to end my voyage only at the sea. It is all make-believe and child's play, if you will—this exploring in the valleys of Peebles or Dumfriesshire—but with very little imagination you may trick it out in the garments of high enterprise. In the first place, there is the vow that you take upon you in all seriousness—to reach the sea. It may be a long and weary struggle ere you get there, for this is a rough-and-tumble sport that I speak of—with more than a flavour of danger to leaven it—but you keep your goal unhesitatingly in view. Then, again, like the true explorer, you carry with you all your goods and chattels, stores and tent, and spurn the hospitality of farms, the proffered help of carts, as "not playing the game," as indefensible and unworthy aids. And finally—and this is the root of the matter, which gives a purpose to the whole—as far as I have been able to learn from written records or enquiries made among the inhabitants, no one of these four rivers, that I and my good crew have navigated, has ever been navigated in its entirety before. As I have said, a river is an ancient institution; and one must speak guardedly of its history, but I do lay claim (until I meet with correction) to have been with my crew the first to navigate the Tweed, the Annan, the Nith and Border Esk. Or at least, let me say, the only one during the last 1,000 years. Some adventurous Pict or Roman may have made these voyages

for a wager. There is a legend current among the country-folk of one who essayed the Tweed in a canoe. They tell, I know not with what truth, how he was rescued by a gillie from the rocks beneath the "Trows," how his leg was broken and the canoe was seen no more by mortal man. And I myself met one who had sailed two miles of the Esk in an india-rubber coracle before his craft was torn and foundered on a rock. The truth is that these rivers are not possible in a canoe or coracle. They are full of



Ward Muir.

A REACH ON THE ESK: PLAIN SAILING.

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rapids, rocks and weirs, where the force of the water is very great, and it needs a stouter craft to withstand the hammering and battering one must encounter. It is wild work at times, when the river is in spate; upsets are frequent, shipwreck not unknown, and many of my treasured stores—a camera and log-book among them—lie even now a sport for fishes in the pit of some black whirlpool. But far be it from me to smile at unsuccessful attempts of other men. I remember all too vividly my own first effort—the only one in which my vow was unfulfilled. It was many years ago that four lusty schoolboys set to work to haul a massive punt from Moffat to the sea. The Annan was very low and the water bitter cold, for we had chosen the not inappropriate date of April 1st for our departure. The ship was hopelessly overloaded, and for the most part refused to float; the stores were wet from the first; and after eight days of toil and nights of misery, only twelve miles from our goal, the end came. A part of the crew had seceded, and one of the remainder was helpless with a sprained ankle; the last pole was broken, and we bowed before the decree of fate. It has always been matter of wonder to me how that wrong-headed expedition ever got so far as it did; but at least it taught us much. When next we put to sea it was



B. Smith.

"UGLY LITTLE SNUB-NOSED CRAFT."

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with a fleet of seven boats and a crew of five, and in the interval—more, I admit, by luck than by good guidance—we had hit upon, I verily believe, the only type of boat capable of accomplishing this sort of voyage. We have had half-a-dozen expeditions since then, continually made improvements in the camp and built more than one new ship; but we have never attempted to improve upon the model. The fleet, then, consists of seven ugly, if we must speak the plain, unvarnished truth, little snub-nosed, box-like boats, only to be compared to foreshortened punts, innocent of curves, with bow and stern alike. They are some 6ft. long by 2ft. 6in. in breadth, flat bottomed and drawing only 3in. of water. They are built of spruce, and the value of them is, perhaps, some 16s. each. They lay no claim to elegance or ingenuity of construction. Their interest rests only

in the exploits that they have performed. For the oldest of them has travelled nearly 300 miles of rivers that anyone will tell you are impossible, and four times has reached salt water at the journey's end. At night they are drawn up in the form of a hollow square, and a tent covers the whole—dry straw is brought in, and every member of the crew sleeps in his own ship. The camp, indeed, after ten years of evolution, is a triumph of comfort and ingenuity—with their inviting beds ranged on every side and a table and stove in the centre, candlesticks attached to the tent poles, convenient lockers and larder close at hand. For the whole of this is carried by day in the two luggage punts, clamped down with a water-tight lid and thumbscrews, so that they may, if they will, keel over or capsize without admitting a drop of water. And at night it is a pleasant thing to see the entire mechanism of the camp produced in some few minutes, one might almost say "hatched," out of these two little punts.

When the navigator puts to sea in the morning it is with the pleasant consciousness that come what may his stores are well secured. He sits flat upon the bottom of his punt, a short paddle in each hand—not that he will need to row or in any way propel himself, for the river does the work, and the current as a rule will carry him quite as fast as, and on occasion even rather faster than, he may desire—but for steering only. His boat takes little water, and will creep over the shallows, content with rolling a few stones along with it; it is practically unbreakable, it is not easily overturned and goes indifferently bow or stern foremost; indeed, no distinction can be made between bow and stern. Now this is a

point of very great importance. Again and again at rocky corners he will strike a boulder and swing with the current, when it would be impossible to turn about again, for it is fatal to come sideways upon any obstacle. The weight of water behind fills the boat at once, and she will sink in a few seconds. He sits still, a paddle in each hand, a spare one in case of accidents by his side, choosing his course, and at all costs keeping her head straight, and, after a few wild, glorious moments, floats out into the pool below. But it must not be supposed that he is always labouring among rocks. There are only some half-dozen really difficult places on these rivers. A great part of his time is spent among sweet little shingly rapids, with rolling waves and not a rock in view, where he may lie back in his punt and revel in the motion, while he watches his feet rise and fall, and sees beyond them now the river and now the sky. There are the slow dark reaches also, where he floats

idly on with the almost imperceptible current. It is then that he has leisure to look about him, rejoicing in a new view of the valley that is given to him alone, from the centre of the stream itself. And then again he will come to shallows and must get out and haul his boat across a ridge of gravel. And all the time, mile by mile, he is pressing onward, leaving the heather hills behind, seeing the valley open up on either side of him—pressing onward to the sea. Indeed, it is a sport for kings. Days on the Tweed can be well remembered when nearly twenty miles were travelled in a few hours, riding on among the buoyant black waves, or moving slowly down the silent reaches, while the boat spun quietly round and round, opening up every moment a new view of the wooded slopes of that superb valley. The Tweed was the greatest of our undertakings. It took us ten days to travel from Peebles to the sea. And to me the other side of the question has also its fascination. It was already dark on a September evening when we once were confronted with the sight of the entire expedition wrecked and submerged in mid-stream in the pool below the "Trows." For four hours we laboured, swimming for the boats, hauling them across a marsh and up a hill in the darkness before



B. Smith.

A RIVER-SIDE CAMP.

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B. Smith.

ON YARROW WATER.

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we could find a level camping-ground, searching the river bank for lost paddles, rowlocks or stores, repairing breakages by lamp-light; and it was not till 1.45 a.m. that supper at last appeared upon the board, and we were content to crawl into bed, and wait till the morrow to count up our losses. At the best of times one is battered, dirty, bruised and wet to the skin before the evening comes, and almost inevitably one sits all day in a pool of water.

Dear to my heart are the upper reaches of the Annan, a string of sportive little rapids, scurrying round corners and under overhanging boughs; while the Nith gave us little really good water to look back upon, but that little was of the best. It runs for some four miles through a narrow gully, terminating in the "Devil's Elbow" above Thornhill, and all this way it is soft, below the roadway, threading one of the most beautiful valleys in Scotland. The tourist traffic does not penetrate to the upper Nith; and so unsophisticated are the people there, that one of the many pilgrims who came on the Sunday to visit the camp lifted her baby into a punt and out again, so that "he might say when he grew to be a man that he had once been in a boat."

The intense interest of the inhabitants in these wild enterprises is always a source of amusement. As we were nearing Berwick-on-Tweed came forth a scout from the city to report our arrival. "You're before your advertised time!" he cried, and rushed madly down the bank to spread the news. Nor could we ever learn by what authority our time had been advertised. I like to recall also the old lady whom we came upon in a quiet corner on the Annan washing clothes in the stream. She gazed at us for a moment in amazement, and then "Are ye Rooshans or Turks?" she cried, and vanished into the wood. There are sundry salmon-fishers who have been not a little surprised to find the flotilla shooting suddenly round a bend, perhaps between the angler and his line; but we found them always too good sportsmen to complain when we without evil intent thus disturbed their water.

Many of my readers are no doubt well acquainted with the rivers I write of, and I fear that some of them may find it difficult to understand how it is possible to float a fleet of boats at all in Annan or in Esk; and, indeed, there is a glorious uncertainty about it. Twice when everything was on the spot I have had to abandon an expedition for want of water. But rain is frequent in this country, and these rivers rise very rapidly when it comes. And if one has the good fortune—and we have nearly always been fortunate—to set sail at the top of a flood,

there is water enough and to spare. Our greatest stroke of luck was with the Esk two years ago. It is safe to say that this stream is only fit to navigate for a few days in the year. The expedition was camped at Shillahill on the Annan, and two scouts went up on bicycles to Eskdalemuir to inspect. The river was quite hopeless at the time, but it was raining, and they had faith enough to stay the night and await developments; and with the dawn the little fleet was loaded on a lorry and brought across the hills in feverish haste. When we set sail from the bridge at Eskdalemuir the stream was in high flood. That day upon the Esk was the greatest day of all, and I know well that we shall never see another like it. The river (which falls some 600ft. in thirty miles) was one continuous raging rapid. For six hours we were hurtling down the valley, with no time to light a pipe and little chance of stopping. It was a great day in Eskdale. The news had spread to outlying farms, and every bridge was loaded with spectators; the lamb sale at Langholm came automatically to an end for lack of buyers; and for myself, I upset three times



Ward Muir.

DOWN ESKDALE: BREAKERS AHEAD!

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in twelve miles, the third time in full view of the delighted inhabitants of Westerkirk. It is good to look back upon that "glorious hour of crowded life," when it took all our strength and long-accumulated skill in navigation—for this art is not learned in a day—to overcome the fury of the stream. And the quiet dreamy days are good to look back upon; and the camp, with the sweet beds of straw that rustle pleasantly as one turns over in the night. It is all good.

BERTRAM SMITH.

SHOOTING.

COVERT FOR GAME.

HERE is one point, at least, in which a distinct change has come over the spirit of shooting parties within the last two or three years. It is now scarcely possible to join one for a day or two and not to hear frequent discussions on various gardening topics, the beauty, character and habit of flowers, shrubs, trees and so on, with all the long Latin names reeled off with a fluency that is sometimes a little suspicious, and savours somewhat of a gardening encyclopaedia. It is quite a modern change. Only a few years back the ideal conception of the shooter was a man of blood to whom such a gentle and lady-like pursuit as gardening was then supposed to be, would appeal about as powerfully as crochet-work. And just as soon as the shooter began to take even the most amateurish interest in gardening he began to see that the two, the shooting and the gardening, might have something in common, far apart though they seemed, and that if the shooting could not do much to help the gardening, at least the gardening might do much for the shooting. He discovered that there are many plants and shrubs which he might cultivate in his woods that would give as good covert as the wild native growths, as well as giving the woods an additional and varied beauty, and also that there was a science of arboriculture and forestry which might show him how to make his woodland valuable, not only as a domicile for game, but also for its timber. It was with a recognition of this new view on the part of

the shooter that we published last autumn an article in these pages on "The Covert Beautiful," suggesting in a very general way how certain flowering and bright-leaved shrubs might be used at once as covert for game and as ornamentation of the landscape. We have now under review a book almost on the same subject by Mr. John Simpson, published by Messrs. Pawson and Brailsford, Sheffield. The title is "Game and Game Coverts," and probably few men are as well qualified as its author to write on the subject. He was for many years Lord Wharncliffe's agent, is a recognised authority on forestry and has written a very useful book on the rabbit, called "The Wild Rabbit and Rabbit Warrens." He knows his subject, therefore, from both points of view; that is to say, from the point of view of the game and also from that of the covert—the vert and the venison, as the ancients would have said—and he knows it best from the side of the covert, which is especially the side on which we want more enlightenment.

Mr. Simpson's knowledge of the shrubs and so on is, however, thorough; we appreciate that this is so as we read. It is impossible to discuss the book in detail, because it is all details, so to say—made up of discourses and descriptions of the best shrubs and plants to set in different situations, e.g., those which will stand shade and drip, are therefore suitable for planting under trees, and those which demand more light for their welfare. He writes with a thorough understanding of what game demand

in the way of covert, if they are to be healthy. He knows the value of shelter from a cutting wind, and tells us what to plant for a wind screen, and he understands the conditions of modern shooting sufficiently to realise that among the other essentials of a covert it must be of a character through which the beaters can work, so as to push the birds out. Up to a point, as it appears to us, he understands the conditions of modern shooting, but we have to confess that he does not appear sufficiently to understand, or to consider, the planting of the coverts in such a way as will at all facilitate the keeper's work in showing the birds well from them. How this is catered for under his system, as we understand it, of central high trees and low marginal covert we do not quite gather. In fact, this side, and it is a very important one, of the main subject he seems to ignore almost entirely. But, although it is really such a very important branch of the subject, the fact that this author does not deal with it as we think it deserves, does not really detract from the value of his work as a whole as much as might be thought, because it is just this side of the question which the ordinary shooter—he who is apt to talk Latin "through his hat" about the shrubs and planting—really knows pretty well. Therefore, reading this book with intelligence, he may supply from his own store of knowledge anything in this regard which it lacks, and will find in it what he himself is so very much in need of, namely, a very full and trustworthy account of the shrubs which may best be grown in certain situations, and the purposes, for the welfare of game, which they will serve.

For the rest the author is thoroughly practical and has the courage of his opinions, advocating a very free use of the axe or saw in cutting out great glades in big woods of thin timber, and seeing the superior value of many small coverts as compared with one or a few large ones. He discusses with knowledge the shrubs which are more or less rabbit-proof, and in this connection we may notice particularly his recommendation that when you order the Corsican pine you should "see that you get it," and not some variety such as the Austrian, which is not nearly as rabbit-proof. He commends the deodar family for their excellence as roosting trees, and knows that pheasants like eating the fruit of the berry-bearing shrubs. His knowledge of the timber forestry is at least as accurate and full as his knowledge of the requirements of game. A good point is that he does not run any theories to death; he is no faddist. Thus, he will give the fine polygonum, let us say, all its value as a covert, both for the good of game and for ease of beaters working through it; but he can also say that nothing makes much better covert than the common bramble with undergrowth thrown down so that it has to push up through it seeking light. He puts a very high value, for rabbits especially, on the whin or gorse, and indicates how to encourage its growth. Of box, by the by, he says that it does not grow so as to make a solid covert.

He might modify this remark in some coverts that we know of on the Norfolk and Suffolk border. However, box is not to be recommended for covert on many grounds; it is too slow in growth for one thing, and it is not good for beaters to work in. His remarks on willow growth and other planting near water are specially to be noticed.

The early pages of the book contain some very pretty illustrations from photographs of some of the principal trees, shrubs and plants referred to in the text. On the whole, it is a book to be highly commended, because in dealing with a subject which is much discussed at the moment the author speaks with much more than common knowledge; but, at the same time, in all the advice as to planting, so far as it concerns pheasant coverts, we think that the reader ought to bear the fact in mind that the health of the pheasants appears to have been much more the object of the writer's study than the manner in which the keeper is to show them on the day of the big shoot.

INCENDIARISM ON IRISH MOORS.

WE have had frequent occasion lately to refer to the good work which is being done in an unfavourable environment by the Irish Game Protection Association. An example of the peculiar bitterness of class hatred with which it has to contend is furnished by the incendiaryism which has set fire to many miles of grouse country, locally spoken of as mountain, in County Leitrim. The motive appears to be to spoil the shooting, because the landlords have declined to sell their freehold to the tenants, which is a sufficiently spiteful conception in itself. But the villainy of the act regarded from this point of view seems as nothing in comparison with the wicked cruelty of the way in which the spite is wreaked. The burning is especially timed so as to destroy all game in the close season—the grouse on their nests, the young hares in their forms and so forth. That human beings should be willing to inflict so much pain for the gratification of their petty revenge seems hardly credible, yet apparently it is true. It is a mercy, perhaps, that Irish skies are moist, and its heather rarely in the mood for burning.

DISEASED GROUSE.

It is to be feared that the pathologists of the Grouse Disease Commission will no more be receiving condolences because they have no subjects to investigate. From all we are able to hear there is grouse disease, and of the most virulent kind, rampant in the very heart of the Scottish grouse country. In Perthshire the indications point to the worst form of this disease, in the fact that many well-nourished birds are picked up dead of it. On examination these are found to have the lungs wasted to a blackened particle and the muscular tissues in a healthy condition, which shows how very rapid the progress of the disease must have been. Of course, it is foolish to anticipate the worst, but all evidences seem to point to the likelihood that this will be a very severe outbreak; there is the large stock, the wonderful immunity for so many past years, and so on. At the same time, birds are in strong health, and their care and that of the moors is understood better than it was. All this is in their favour; but it is most unfortunate that the exceptional cold and wet at the end of May should arrive just when they are nesting. The promise was extraordinarily good, but these are cruel drawbacks to the fulfilment.

[Further notes on Shooting will be found on our later pages.]

ON THE GREEN.

THE INTERNATIONAL.

IT is singular how divergent are the views that are held about the international match—that annual match of quite recent institution, in which nine English meet nine Scottish golfers. That is the right way in which to speak of the sides. I am sorry that it is so. It would be more interesting in my humble judgment, and more in accord with the idea entertained by those who set this annual match going, if it were a match of sides representing English golf and Scottish golf respectively. That, however, it can never be so long as we have Mr. Graham, who virtually learnt every stroke of his game at Hoylake, and Mr. Barry, who is no less strictly a disciple of St. Andrew, playing, the former for Scotland because his parentage is Scottish, and the latter for England because his parentage is English. Under the conditions as they exist no one has the slightest ground for quarrel with either of these patriotic and good men because of his selection; but in the result the original idea of the match as a trial of strength between golf learnt in England and golf learnt in Scotland is quite defeated. That, however, is a small matter; but the difference in the interest in this match taken by one man and by another, both of whom are, perhaps, equally interested in golf generally, is quite curious. There are some Gallios who even go so far as to say in the vernacular that this match is "all rot," and that it ought to be abolished. I think it would be an immense pity if it were to be abolished, and do not for a moment think it ever will be. It would be a pity, not nearly so much by reason of whatever of interest it may contain on its own account as because it gives such a fine opportunity of bringing out the talent which is rising. It is a very commonplace of golfing remark that it is wonderful how the older men keep their places right in front; how difficult it seems for the younger to push up their way and oust them. Far the best chance the younger ones have of running up against

the older is given them in the amateur championship and in the international match, and the former is so capricious in its decisions and its draw that a good man may play year after year in it and never make a mark at all—scotched, perhaps, in his first heat by some great gun, the terror of whose artillery is so enormous that his own little guns are practically spiked before the action begins. In the hard task of choosing fit and proper persons to represent a country, the selectors of each team make it their business to become acquainted, so far as may be, with the performances and promise of the local pets, the young fellows who are the lions of their own clubs but have not yet killed game of any note in the open. If they seem really lion-like enough, they are given a try in the international team, and even if they are not given a trial, the fact of getting their names on the candidates' list for selection is something: it all helps them to confidence. Annually there are some twenty or thirty of whom their friends say proudly that they were "tenth choice for the international team." They themselves are not the last to believe it; and all this makes for the confidence without which it is so difficult for the rising player to break through the already risen crust of age and experience. As for the actual result of the most recent international match, the Scottish victory by 8 holes to 1, it is, of course, a matter of history by this time; but speaking, myself, as one of the sorely-harassed selectors, I can say, feelingly, that the task was a very hard one, and there were at least two players whom it was very cruel to exclude, though to exclude any one or two of the others would have been still more cruel. Scotland played Mr. Robb first, in compliment to his champion title, and our own most courageous new departure was in putting an absolutely new man, Mr. Barker, up second to Mr. John Ball. At that exalted altitude he had to meet Mr. Maxwell. Mr. Barry was given third place, where he met Mr. Graham, and our other new man, Mr. Lincoln, at seven, encountered

Mr. C. K. Hutchison. Two very old enemies in Mr. Hilton and Mr. Laidlay met at fifth place for their respective sides, and the fortune of war brought me up, at four, against the big guns of Mr. Edward Blackwell, with whom I had had a great match in the same event last year at Hoylake, when he won on the last green. The other pairs were Mr. Fry against Mr. Andrew, Mr. de Zoete against Mr. Gordon Simpson and Mr. Mitchell against Mr. Aitken.

I think an English scribe might mercifully be excused from dwelling long upon the painful details. There was one bright page, and one only, in the national story; Mr. John Ball, after being 3 down to Mr. Robb at the thirteenth hole in the morning, finished the first round 1 up, and finally won by 6 up and 4 to play. But for the rest the story is doleful. At luncheon-time Mr. Barker and Mr. Barry both had a lead of a hole for England; but in the afternoon Mr. Maxwell, playing a very fine game, got the better of his opponent, and won fairly easily by 3 and 2, and Mr. Graham, undefeated as ever in these matches, beat Mr. Barry by the same balance. Other results were even worse from the English point of view. Mr. Gordon Simpson won by 10 and 9 from Mr. de Zoete and Mr. Andrew beat Mr. Fry by 9 and 8. Mr. Blackwell, whose putting was really very fine indeed, finished me off by 6 and 5, and Mr. Hutchison and Mr. Aitken both won their matches from Mr. Lincoln and Mr. Mitchell respectively, with three holes still to play. The only match to reach the last green was that between Mr. Laidlay and Mr. Hilton, where the former did a fine three, and so won by 2. Mr. Hilton's one-handed putting (and he putted well) was a feature. I believe at the start the betting was 4 to 1 on Scotland, and though 4 to 1 looks like very long odds about a golf match, still the event seems to prove that they were justified. It may well be, too, that a team can better be relied on to do its duty than any individual member. The blessed law of averages seems to come in to correct the glorious uncertainties. I am afraid, however, that one thing is clear—that as regards amateur golf by teams Scotland is ahead of England. She has all that great class of artisan golfers and clerk golfers to draw from which is only coming into existence in England, and it is my strong conviction that they could put a hundred men into the field of whom any nine could hold their own, and perhaps a little more than their own, with the best nine that England could bring against them.

THE LATE MR. CATHCART OF PITCAIRIE.

IT was sad to see the flag on the Royal and Ancient staff flying at half-mast for the death of Mr. Cathcart of Pitcairie, the "Bob" Cathcart very well known to, and regarded with universal affection by, an older generation. So long ago as 1857 Mr. Cathcart was captain of the Royal and Ancient, and this year, the jubilee of his former term of office, the very rare honour was offered him of a second captaincy; but his health obliged him to decline it. Up to the very last, however, his interest in golf and in the club was without abate, and he held the office of Convenor of the Green Committee when he died. He was a Laird of Fife and Deputy-Lieutenant of the county, active in all county business. No words, however, can express his personality, his never-failing kindness and that interest in the interests of others which made him seem coeval in heart with even the youngest up to the very day of his death. A notable link in the chain between past and present in golfing history is lost with him.

THE AMATEUR CHAMPIONSHIP.

The present amateur championship, whatever its results, beats all previous records for number of competitors. Over 200 is the sum total, and it is enough. As to who is to win it, the man who would prophesy would deserve to be chosen leader of a forlorn hope; but 10 to 1 odds against individual players, among whom are Mr. Maxwell, Mr. Ball, Mr. Barker and Mr. Gallacher, show the confidence of their supporters, and the golden harvest that a bookmaker ought to reap if he were on the spot. As it is, this branch of the sport is left to a few amateurs, whose books are modest in amount if immodest in the odds that are noted in them. The green is in fine order after the continuous rains of the later spring and the long rest which the winter snow afforded it; but soon after these comments meet the reader's eye the result will be matter of history, and it is not improbable that some man quite unknown to golfing fame will have been suddenly made famous.

OPENING OF PRINCE'S AT SANDWICH.

It is my opinion that one of the best courses in the world is going to be opened on June 8th, with all ceremony, by Mr. A. J. Ballour and by a competition for a gold vase, value £100—no less!—given by the "Founder." "Founder" is a title that suggests a long-dead and probably canonised benefactor; but, mercifully, this founder is still with us in the flesh. The course is that which is called Prince's, at Sandwich, on part of which many of us have played for years, slicing the tee shot or the second on the way to the fourteenth or Suez Canal hole on the old course. There is every reason why it should be a good links, for the ground is everything that it should be, and, granting that, it would be strange, seeing that ideas on the laying out of courses are developing, we hope, for the better, and that this is the first seaside green, of the highest class, to be laid out in Great Britain for the use of the rubber-core ball, if it were not good. There have been troubles; no water was laid on last year, and there was never a year when the need for water was greater. So the new greens dried up. But this was a matter which chiefly affected the "Founder." The ordinary golfer was only affected in so far that the course was not opened to him. It was, however, opened, without the formalities and splendour of June 8th, at Easter. We could see what it was like then. Since that time the weather has been favourable enough, with lots of rain. The greens should be good, and the first impressions—generally the worst—of the new country should be very favourable.

ANOTHER "MANUAL" FOR THE GOLFER.

A humble and handy little book, distinguished by a preface contributed by Dr. Macnamura, is the "Golfers' Manual," by W. Meredith Butler. It is handy because it is light to hold, and convenient to read and to find one's way about, and it is humble because it makes no claim at all to originality either in arrangement or remark. It begins classically with the Acts of the Scottish Parliament, and goes on through the vocabulary and the clubs to the art of playing the game, rising from the simplest strokes to those which no book can indicate, and ending with the rules. It is thus just like the hundred-and-one other books of the kind that have seen the light, and it has certainly the merit of presenting the familiar things in a convenient form. There is a useful index. In a section headed "Things to Remember" comes a series of negative commandments, each beginning with a "Don't" in big capital letters. The author has said at the start that his remarks are addressed to the beginner; but, still, when he writes, "Don't give up a hole because you are two or three strokes behind your opponent," he does seem to be giving counsel that can only be applicable to a class of golf in which a great many strokes are taken to a hole. As a rule, when "two or three strokes behind" at any one hole, it is only common mercy and justice to those who are coming after to save time by picking up the ball. The author has a pious belief in the efficiency of the professional as teacher, selector of clubs, philosopher and friend in all the trials of golf, and equally in the Right Honourable A. J. Balfour, with his title written out very much at large, as a golfer. One of what he calls the essentials of success, of which he says "Don't forget it," is "Beware of high tees." My own humble opinion is that if the ordinary duffer did not consider it a point of honour to play off as low a tee, or as "no" a tee, as Taylor, he would not be such an ordinary duffer as he is. Most of the "Don'ts," however, are quite beyond criticism in respect of the soundness of their caution, and some are even a little more than this; as, for instance, "Don't play too often with your best friend; you may lose him." On the whole, this is a useful little book, but will not set the links afire with novelty. Mr. T. Werner Laurie is its publisher.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

EVADING THE STYME.

PERHAPS one of the most curious features of the modern development of the game has been the settled policy of a large number of players to shirk the responsibility, wherever possible, of playing the stymie. Matches are habitually made and played on the previous understanding that the stymie rule shall be abrogated. Among friendly matches this system of making a private arrangement is known to exist very widely; but the antipathy to the stymie seems to have spread to such an extent that even among strangers playing in team matches it is not a rare occurrence to hear one opponent say to the other, "Shall we play stymies?" One of the final rounds of a Parliamentary Tournament was played under an agreement to ignore stymies. To the player who is a stickler for maintaining the pristine characteristics of the game, the question as to whether or not stymies should be played strikes the ear very much in the equivalent sense of asking whether or not the game of golf should be played, or whether it might not be advisable for the time being to substitute "a sort of game" which is neither croquet nor golf. Thus when contracts are entered into between players to evade the stymie rule, it is clear that one of the characteristic features of the game is being quite needlessly eliminated. The match that is played without the moral effect of the stymie being felt can in no sense be looked upon as the same adequate test of skill and temperament as when the stymie is in full effective force.

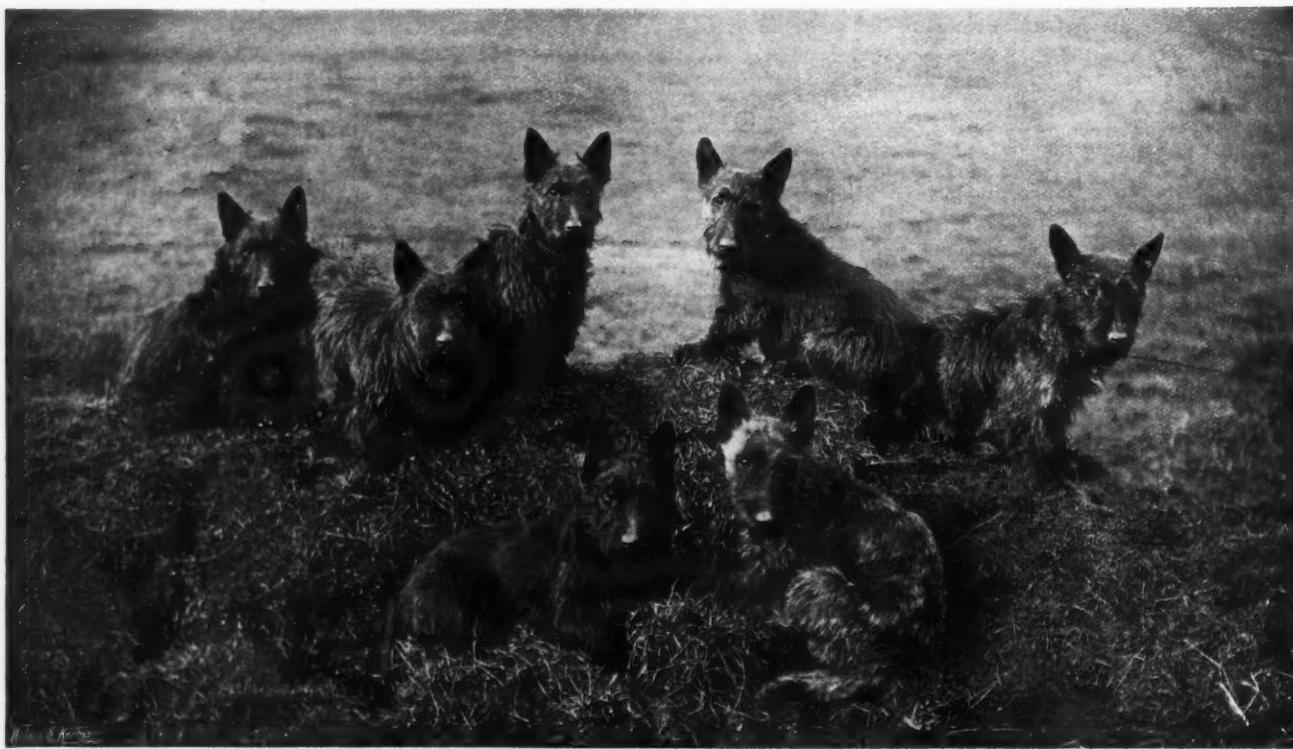
It is always useful, however, to look at golf problems from the mental standpoint of those who take a rooted objection to one or two of their alleged unfair features. The argument of those who object to the stymie is that it is a radically unfair rule, and that its scrupulous enforcement places a premium upon bad and loose play. The contention is that the stymie is always the result either of bad approaching or of bad putting, and that the player who has played all his shots up to that point with fair perfection should not have his chances of victory prejudiced by an accidental roll or twist of the ball which has the effect of blocking the hole. No one denies that sometimes in a succession of matches awkward and irritating stymies of this kind are very frequently laid; but in the same way no one with any fair experience of match play will deny that the chances of give and take on each side are very evenly balanced. The fallacy which match players have to rid their minds of is the supposition that the stymie can be laid against the opponent at will. In nine cases out of ten it is a pure accident, due to the fact that the player has just failed to hit his ball hard enough to get into the hole; and when you hear a match player proclaim *urbi et orbi* that he always tries to lay his opponent a stymie, you may be sure that he is but playing the innocent, though sometimes effective, game of prodding the temperament of his opponent through the medium of "bluff." If a player could always lay a stymie at will it is quite certain that he could always hole the putts of which the stymie is the abortive outcome; and, therefore, when anyone hears the ironical boast that stymies are always played for, the only sound policy to pursue is to refuse to allow the mind to be influenced by the fate which is threatened, and to brace one's self up to the resolute determination to surmount the difficulty of the stymie whenever it may happen to occur. It is

undoubtedly galling to find a player, who has played a series of imperfect shots up to the hole, depriving you of the certain chance of victory through laying a dead stymie by his last shot. But, on the other hand, no other experience that can be enjoyed in the course of the match is so exhilarating as that which ensues to the player when, by superior skill and delicacy of touch, he holes the stymie, and empties the phials of discomfiture and chagrin upon his opponent.

A very important decision has just been given by the Rules Committee of the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews on this question of the stymie. In the course of late years one or two departures in practice have been sanctioned in the old rule which used to govern the stymie. The old rule was that a player could not play on the opponent's ball with greater strength than was necessary to take his own ball the length of the hole. That was both a good and a sound rule, for it kept the opponent's ball inviolate from the slamming attacks which are now sanctioned as being permissible against it. Three or four years ago St. Andrews modified the rule to the extent that a player was allowed to make use of his opponent's ball, when a stymie was laid, to hole out in the fashion of a losing hazard at billiards. The result of that modification was to permit a good deal of undesirable battering against the obstructing ball, and also to produce wrangles as to whether or not the ball which had been knocked away should be played out of the bunker or the bent zoys. away, or whether it could be replaced at the spot upon which it originally lay.

THE KEEPER'S HUT.

IT had stood for years untenanted. No one knew when or why it was first built; only the most patriarchal among the "oldest inhabitants" made any pretence to recollect anything about the last occupier. And the sum of their testimony came to this—that he was a sort of superannuated gamekeeper, whom Squire had allowed to live there rent free, and who made such living as he could by rude rushwork and catching eels, and occasionally snaring wildfowl. And one day he was found dead, and the local papers were full of the "harrowing discovery," which they dilated on with superabundant details. It was doubtless owing in part to this uncanny termination of the tenancy that from that day the hut had stood desolate. But apart from this, it must be admitted that as a place of residence the Keeper's Hut was almost unthinkable and became more so as time went on. Years of vacancy had not contributed to its weather-worthiness; in fact, that it stood at all was a sterling tribute to its original stability. The doors and windows were broken, the roof in more than one place fallen through, the leaning chimney only kept in its place by the straggling branches of a willow that had grown against the wall. But comfortless as it was as a dwelling, the hut was undoubtedly a picturesque feature in the landscape. It occupied a slight eminence—the only spot, it was said, which, when the winter floods rose and the snow water rushed down from the high land



C. Reit, Wishaw, N.B.

"UNCO' PACK AN' THICK TOGETHER."

Copyright.

Obviously the official sanction of that practice destroyed all need for acquiring the highly scientific art of lofting over or screwing round the opponent's ball; and, to that extent, one of the best features of the game was destroyed. It was but a short step from that practice of smashing at the opponent's ball to the prevalent habit which has grown up of contracting out of the stymie rule altogether in playing matches connected with important tournaments. By this process of deterioration the stymie was in a fair way of disappearing altogether as one of the essential features of match play. But all golfers who have viewed the declension with disfavour will be gratified to know that the Rules Committee have, by their recent decision, done much to rehabilitate the stymie with the traditional dignity and importance it formerly bore. The Royal Melbourne Golf Club put the case of two finalists in a tournament who refused to play stymies. The Rules Committee were asked whether the players could agree between themselves to play the ball nearest the hole first, and whether any rule obliged the players to play stymies. The answer given is that "as stymies are a recognised part of the game of golf, it is not permissible for players in a tournament to refuse to play them," that they cannot agree between themselves that the ball nearest the hole should be played first, that a player is not allowed to lift his ball, with the consent of his adversary, to avoid a stymie, and that under Rules 5 and 16 the penalty is disqualification for failure to play the stymie.

A. J. ROBERTSON.

round about, was never submerged. For all the ravages of time, the hut still stood in its damaged solidity four square to the winds. Around it the marsh stretched for miles—here an "illimitable fen," here stretches of smooth bright verdure, tempting to sight, but death to venture on, as more than one fatherless family knew to its cost—here reed and rush and osier, with, in places, a thin belt of willows—in the eastern distance the spreading sluggish streams of the converging rivers as they gathered to their union ere they merged into the sea. Once when a casual revival of that gruesome story of the last tenant had attracted attention to the marsh and the hut, a certain well-known painter had come there, and been ravished with the weird splendour of the landscape. It reminded him, he said, and his picture bore out his words, of that grim fenland where the Red Knight lived and met his doom—

o'er the illimitable reed
And many a glancing plash and sallowy isle
The wide-winged sunset of the misty marsh

glared on the widening waters, and clothed with blood-red flame
the sullen solitary hut.

It was, of course, a foregone conclusion that in a comparatively primitive neighbourhood legends should grow and multiply around the lonely hut. The original and simplest form these took was naturally associated with the Last Tenant. He had been seen, ghastly and spectral, laying ghostly snares or fashioning shadowy baskets. The solitary angler would be

aware of a gaunt figure in tattered velveteen watching him with gleaming eyes in a livid face. If, unknowing or unmindful, the angler spoke to it, the figure would vanish before his eyes, and a gust of deathly cold wind—no matter how hot or calm the day—would whirl around him. Another variant had it that once—the time is indeterminate, as befits your genuine legend—a casual visitor looked in at the hut, and there in a corner lay the fearsome body just as it was when discovered years and years before. The visitor “sickened and shuddered and fled from the door,” and full of the horror of his discovery, and convinced that it pointed to a recent tragedy, hurried to the village and told the constable. After some hesitation, at which he indignantly wondered, the constable and two stout fellows accompanied him back to the hut. But there was no dead body there—only that cold charnel-house atmosphere enveloped them; and the blacksmith’s dog that had come with his master howled suddenly and slunk away, and was found afterwards hidden in a corner of the forge cowering and shivering. And so the legend grew, and acquired later the picturesque addition of red lights gleaming at times through the broken window, and the dark shadow of “the old man” wandering about at nightfall looking for ghostly birds in spectral snares. The whole story was very properly stigmatised as ridiculous rubbish by “the quality,” who talked about *ignis fatuus* and mist wreaths, and referred with inconsiderate emphasis to the strength and popularity of the liquor sold at the village inn.

But the Keeper’s Hut was destined to provide yet another sensation, startling enough, but not at all supernatural. One day the miller’s little six year old daughter was missing. She was generally described by the neighbours as being “that venturesome there was no holding of her,” and by her mother as “a handful if there ever was one,” and in spite, or because, of these seemingly contrary attributes, was a universal pet and plaything. Enquiries elicited that she was last seen early in the afternoon, with her doll clutched firmly by one leg—the unhappy thing’s usual unhealthy position—in the lane leading to the marsh. The marsh was forbidden under pains and penalties of the direst corporal character; but the mother remembered with a pang that a tame rabbit which shared with the doll the child’s passionate devotion had escaped, and the father had said in her hearing that, of course, it had made for the marsh. And weighed with the rescue of the poor rabbit, pains and penalties would count for little with The Pet. The autumn evening drew on apace, and uneasiness became alarm. Only by those who knew it well could the marsh be traversed in safety; the planks and causeways across the “quakes” were hard to find. Tradition had it that one, at least, of the swamps was bottomless, and their green smoothness would be just the thing to attract a child. A search party was organised, and as the pale, distracted mother stood to watch them off, those near her saw her start and point at something and then cover her eyes with a wild cry. And looking where she had pointed they shuddered in their turn, and the whisper ran round—“*The lights in the hut!*”

On and on went the searchers, more hopeless each step they took, till at last they came to the most treacherous “quake” of all, 50yds. or so from the hut. And then for the first time they, too, saw the “lights,” and saw, too, another sight that made “the boldest hold his breath for a time.” For in front of the hut, half shrouded in mist, lurid and blood-hued in the red light from the window, stood a gaunt, forbidding figure. It was the miller, having most at stake, who first broke the spell.

“Old man or old devil, I want my child,” he said, hoarsely, and led the way across the narrow zigzag causeway that crossed the “quake.” And then the Figure spoke, in a rough voice enough, albeit rather faint and quavery, and sweeter words surely ghost nor man ever uttered.

“She’s all right, mates, if you’re looking for the kid. I should ‘ave brought ‘er down presently and chanced it, but ‘er things ain’t dry. She’s all right, I tell yer; come on an’ see for yourselves.”

The search-party hurried into the ill-famed hut. In the broken hearth was a glowing fire of peat and wood; in front of it, wrapped in a coarse drab-coloured garment, and her face sheltered from the heat by a screen of her own clothes fastened up to dry, lay The Pet, asleep and smiling; and resting against her, so that she might see it when she woke, was the doll, bedraggled and steaming, and obviously uneasy at finding itself in a sitting position.

“It were lucky I found ‘er when I did,” said the Figure; “she were almost—but there! she’s all right now, though I ‘adn’t nothin’ to give ‘er—nothin’, struth.”

The voice certainly sounded shaky, and they began to think they knew why.

The miller lifted the child up, and his eyes fell on the garment she was wrapped in. He started and looked at the Figure, who was leaning trembling against the wall; it was a tattered sack that covered his bare shoulders—the child had on a flannel shirt, with queer markings on it like those on the coat.

“Well, mates, what’s it to be?” asked that raspy quivering voice.

And then the miller remembered that his wife had made him bring some brandy and a great hunk of bread.

In the general rejoicing caused by the triumphal return of The Pet, the misfortunes of the rescue party were scarcely noticed, which was fortunate, for one came back minus a shirt and waistcoat, another a hat and coat, and a third—who was luckily a bachelor—in an improvised pair of nether garments made out of an old sack. The “quakes” had evidently exacted heavy toll. And as the adventure of The Pet engrossed all thoughts for the next few days, no attention was paid to a stupid report about the escape of a convict under sentence for robbery. But it added a new interest to the hut on the marsh for some of those—the miller and his friends among them—who, as became men of light and leading, were foremost in ridiculing the story.

WALTER RICHARDS.

CORRESPONDENCE.

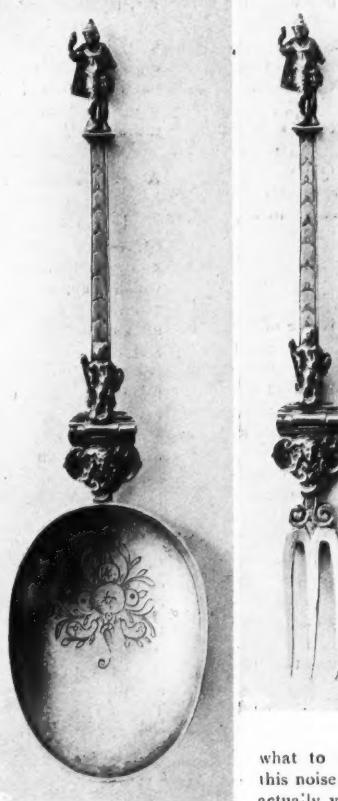
A SEVENTEENTH CENTURY SPOON AND FORK.

[TO THE EDITOR OF “COUNTRY LIFE.”]

SIR,—Can you give me any information as to the silver-gilt spoon shown in the accompanying photographs? This spoon has been for generations in the possession of an old Devonshire family, and it is a tradition with them that it was once the property of Sir Francis Drake and one of the set of thirteen spoons that were presented to each of the Knights of Malta. The possibility of the truth of this tradition of course I know nothing about, but the shape of the fork at the back of the spoon looks to me as if it was a little later than this possible date. Still, there is no doubt it is an extraordinarily good piece, of very great interest, and I should appreciate your kindness if you could tell me something about the spoon.—F.

[We are indebted to Mr. C. J. Jackson for the following information: “The combination spoon-fork and toothpick is an interesting example of the first half of the seventeenth century. It was made for use at a time when

‘dainty folk’ carried such articles with them for use at table and when the majority of Europeans dipped their fingers into the platter for slices of meat. I have a specimen somewhat like it in my own collection; the shape of the bowl of mine, however, indicates a somewhat earlier date, but neither is so early as to have been contemporaneous with Sir Francis Drake. I should, if asked, be disposed to place the date of this article at about 1620. It is of German manufacture, and is beautifully wrought. The figure at the top (which forms the handle of the toothpick) is attired in the costume of the latter half of the sixteenth century, and if the whole were in exact accord with that it might well have been presented to Sir Francis; but the form of the fork and the shape of the spoon-bowl are against that, and it must be borne in mind that the models for figure terminals of this kind remained in use for many years after the fashion in actual dress had been changed.”—ED.]



THE DEVIL AMONG THE TAILORS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF “COUNTRY LIFE.”]

SIR,—A somewhat novel and curious incident occurred in this village about two weeks ago, which may be worthy of your notice. The good landlady of one of the village inns possesses a bright green Paraguayan parrot. Well, by chance, or mischance, call it which you like, this bird escaped from its cage one afternoon and immediately made its way into the open. In the excitement and joy at regaining its liberty, it flew round and about and then alighted on the nearest tree, some 100yds. away, for a short rest before determining what its next movements should be. Such a strange sight presented itself to its hitherto circumscribed mind, that it was quite lost in amazement for a few moments as to

what to do next. But not for long; oh dear no! What was all this noise about? Why, there were large nests, made of sticks, and actually young tender birds in them, black too, real “fuzzy-wuzzies,” a striking contrast to his own brilliant plumage of emerald hue; they were even more noisy than his youngsters might be, if he had ever had any. This was a chance of a lifetime not to be missed. To work he went; first one nest of these fledglings were slaughtered (nothing equals destruction to a parrot’s mind) and thrown overboard, then on to another massacre at a fresh nest; and so quickly did he execute his work that within half-an-hour some thirty nests were despoiled of their contents, which lay scattered on the ground below. What were the parent birds, one may well ask, doing all this time? The sight of such a demoniacal specimen of one of their race had nearly frightened them to death, and instead of using their combined forces to drive

the intruder away and kill him, they were circling round and round at a distance of many hundred feet, judging by the tiny specks they appeared up in the sky, like vultures in a foreign land. Instead of flying further afield, as one would imagine Veni's (to give him his name) next proceeding to be, he came quietly down to the call of one who knew him especially well and settled on his hand like a good domesticated parrot, retiring to his cage as if all this escapade had been merely an everyday performance on his part. To those who witnessed these performances it was rather a comic, though cruel, sight, and certainly an exception to the usual daily round of a colony of rooks. The old rooks are still round and about the nests, but whether they will ever rear another brood this season is rather open to doubt.—A. H. ROBINSON.

DISTRIBUTION OF THE CUCKOO.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—On page 678 of your issue of May 11th the cuckoo is made to appear as a comparatively rare visitor to, among other districts, Westmorland, Cumberland, Durham, Northumberland and Wales; while as regards Scotland and Ireland there is the curious statement that it "is practically unknown" in them! This is so altogether wide of the fact that I can scarcely help thinking some *lapsus calami* must have occurred; but as COUNTRY LIFE circulates so widely among people who might be misled by such slip, it is as well to correct them. With Ireland and some of the other English counties mentioned by your contributor, I leave others, more intimately acquainted with them than I am, to deal, only remarking in passing that in cursory visits to some of them I have never noticed any scarcity of cuckoos, and should be rather surprised to learn that any real dearth existed. With regard to the counties and countries I have specially mentioned above, the truth is that the cuckoo is more abundant in all of them than in most parts of England. In nearly all moorland districts it abounds—this is certainly the case in Wales and in the Northern English counties—while in Scotland it is common throughout the country, and penetrates to most, if not all, of her remotest islands. The usual Gaelic name of the cuckoo is *cuach*, derived from its cry, and from a like cause it is generally known as the gowk in the Lowlands. Both words have been perpetuated in such place names as Mona-Chuich, Ben-Chuich, districts specially favoured by the cuckoo in the North; while in the South we have Penicuik, Gowks Croft and Quickswood, owing their appellations to a like cause. There are many other instances in Scotland, and some also in Wales. Has the cuckoo lent its name to any place in England?—LICHEN GREY.

BIRDS' BATHS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—By far the best bath one can have for birds in the garden is one of the wide shallow earthenware pans used in the country in the dairy. These last for years. They should be sunk in the ground, and edged for appearance sake with virgin cork. If one or two stones are placed in the bath, the bird use these as stepping-stones or "jumping-off places." I have known all kinds of birds use my bath in Dorsetshire; while in this part of London the bath is never deserted for long. The tin baths quickly rust out; these milk dishes have endless wear. They must, however, be watched in a frost, as if one thaws the ice with hot water they are apt to crack.—J. E. PANTON, St. John's Wood.

MAY BLOSSOM.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of a May tree in full blossom. I think perhaps you may think it worthy of a place in COUNTRY LIFE some time. We have never seen one with so much blossom on—it was almost impossible to see any of the leaves. The tree in question is a white May tree and



growing in our own park. It had the appearance of being covered thickly with snow, and was the most wonderful sight.—BERTHA M. HARDY.

A DORMOUSE.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—Most of us chiefly know the dormouse as a sleepy little animal to be kept in a cage with a wheel at the end, to be taken out and waked up when a visitor wants to see him. In the accompanying picture he looks wide awake enough in all conscience, and the brilliance of his eyes is quite remarkable. Now he is growing scarce in England, but his nest may still be discovered sometimes low down in the matted clump of pampas grass or in some old bird's nest, and he does a good deal of useful work in devouring woolly aphids, caterpillars, grubs and so on.—V. H.

NUMBERS OF SMALL RODENTS.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—There seems to be a wonderful number of small rodents and their kin engaged in active campaigns of one destructive kind or another in my garden this year, and I should much like to hear whether others of your readers are suffering similar trouble. Of course, we all know how remarkable are the occasional sudden increases of animals of this family, from the lemming to the vole, which fact accounts for the episode which a person friend of mine always refers to as the story of "the army of the perished bow-strings"—when the

mice gnawed the strings in the night, and left the host as helpless for harm as a modern infantry regiment with no ammunition and no bayonets. But it seems not a little curious that this year of all others, after a winter of quite unusual severity, the little animals should be in such numbers. One would have expected the cold to have killed off at least a percentage of them, yet, to all appearance, it is not so. Can anyone account for it at all? This increase is all right for the kestrels and owls and other creatures which like to prey on them, but it is giving the gardeners a deal of trouble.—G.

A SIMPLE PIGEON-COTE.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I am sending you a photograph of a pigeon-cote, which may, perhaps, be of interest. It has the merits of simplicity and economy and of looking "cottagy," not like a "villa residence" for birds. The idea originated with the death of an old apple tree, which was then sawn off across the trunk at the height of the base of the cote. The cote is an old oil-tub. If oil is not used in the house, so that tubs are not to hand, they can be bought at the local grocer's, most likely, for about 3s or 4s. The work of cutting the holes and putting in the partitions was done by an under-gardener in the slack time of frost, and he also did the thatching with heather. The cote is clamped to its support with iron rods, made for a shilling or two by the local blacksmith, and that and the price of a coat of paint were the whole of the actual cost. The pigeons seem perfectly happy in it, and bring up thriving families. Of course, the palings, enclosing a crimson rambler and protecting it from the cows, is an extra work of supererogation, independent of the main scheme.—EAST SUSSEX.

VEGETABLE BUTTER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I noticed an enquiry by a correspondent in your paper lately as to the use of vegetable butter. As no one else has answered this query I beg to say that I have found it most useful for frying; it has no taste as far as I know; but it is too heavy for pastry or cakes. I am not a vegetarian, and only use it as being cleaner and more tasteless than much of the butter and lard one gets in London. It can be used for sauces just like butter, but coagulates sooner than butter, and unless the sauce is really hot it is apt to get stiff and pasty.—S. B.

